IDFB
Continued
By Jabe

[A/N: Before you read]

STOP! Don't skip to the prologue! There's some stuff you need to know about this.

1.) Except for everything that happened in IDFB 1, as well as the IDFB 2 voting results, **NONE OF THIS IS CANON.** Everything here is how I think things could have gone.

2.) As of the date that that this chapter is published (July 4th 2020), IDFB has not continued past the first episode, but in the possible yet unlikely situation that it does someday, I won't be deleting this or anything. It's just a cool idea that I had. In fact, I'd LOVE to see what was actually planned for IDFB!

(10/29/24 edit: this book was fully written and finished LONG before BFDIA continued in 2023 with episode 6. That being said, enough stuff has happened in BFDIA episodes 6 through 15 [which is where the season is currently at as of the time I'm writing this] that there's many parts of this fic that now clash with canon.)

3.) I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to ever finish this, especially because I'm writing another book at the moment (Crossing Over), but I'm nearly finished with that. When I *do* work on this, the chapters will probably come out a lot slower than the chapters of Crossing Over did, but I'm gonna do my best to write them as close to the IDFB style as I can.

(edit: I totally finished it lmao)

4.) When I mention units of time in the chapters like weeks, months, etc, I'm not referring to real life - I'm referring to time in the story. If Tennis Ball mentions that it's been a month since the last "episode," he means in their time. (Hopefully, it doesn't actually take a month

for me to write each "episode.")

5.) Instead of reader voting or using the IDFB 2 voting results as a template or whatever, I'll be choosing myself who exits the TLC every "episode."

6.) If you haven't watched IDFB 1 yet, then idk what world you're living in cause it's a GREAT episode, so watch it here!

7.) All characters belong to Jacknjellify.

Without further ado, read on and have fun!

Prologue

BFB 16, the EXIT, a few hours before Spongy's elimination

"...well, it's getting late. I'll tell you tomorrow, diary," Loser read out loud to himself. He turned the page, bumping his elbow on the side of the jawbreaker he was trapped inside, but that was it. "But Donut..." He closed the book and looked at the cover. "That was the last entry in your diary! Aw man, looks like I gotta find some new reading material."

He uncrossed his legs, put both hands on separate sides of the jawbreaker, and prepared to break his way out, when he remembered all the post-it notes he had stuck in Donut's diary to mark various pages. Thinking back to BFB 11, he remembered coming across some sort of cryptic message and decided that it wasn't a bad idea to double-check some of the more... suspicious pages in the book.

He flicked through the pages until he found the message he discovered in BFB 11. It read:

"Please be SILENT and LISTEN.
I am the SCHOOLMASTER
and you are in THE CLASSROOM.
Just like ELEVEN PLUS TWO equals
TWELVE PLUS ONE,
And even a FUNERAL can be REAL FUN,
You will find my DICTIONARY
is quite INDICATORY.
If you want to read my story, just look...
THEN UNREAD."

Underneath it was a note in Donut's handwriting: *I found this cool code in one of my favorite book series. I think it's pretty fitting for what this diary really is.*

Five episodes later, Loser still didn't understand what it meant. It was a code, but to what? Unfortunately, Loser was never really one for solving puzzles. But something about the first line bothered him. Like he had heard it somewhere before.

Extremely faint murmurs drifted in from the teeny, tiny hole at the top of his prison, but Loser ignored it. He could never make anything out, due to the weird sound properties of the inside-out jawbreaker.

Inside-out...

It hit Loser like a train, and he slapped his forehead. Of COURSE! The words in all capital letters were ANAGRAMS of each other! Anagrams are when letters of one word get rearranged to form another, like it was being turned inside-out. That's why the first line had bothered him - SILENT and LISTEN was one of the most common anagrams, so it makes sense he would have heard it somewhere. He looked at the code again. All of the phrases in caps had an anagram counterpart... except for THEN UNREAD.

Loser's heart (if he had one) sped up with excitement. All he had to do was figure out an anagram for that. He jotted down some notes and quickly came up with the answer - UNDERNEATH.

His 'heart' began to slow down again. UNDERNEATH? Did that mean Donut had buried something somewhere? No. Donut's note under the code said that it had something to do with the diary.

Loser began to examine the actual diary more closely. The covers seemed to be normal, but something was off with the pages. They were thicker than the pages of most books. He had noticed that before, but shrugged it off. Now...

He chose a page and began to gingerly peel it apart at the corner. He hoped he wouldn't damage anything, but the paper came apart much more easily than he had expected. The one page he had just separated was actually two, glued together. But the glue must have been old, because it didn't tear the paper.

Loser stared at the text hidden underneath the page he thought was one. He tried again on the next page, and it worked. If this applied to

the entire diary, than that means it originally had twice the number of pages it should have had. Loser began to excitedly, but carefully, pull apart each page, one by one. It was a large diary.

After several minutes, having finally finished and somehow not spoiling himself, he went back to the beginning and started to read out loud. "This text is a full third-person account..."

This text is a full third-person account of the events during IDFB, from multiple object's points of view. Donut has been trusted to keep this safe.

Under that was another note, but in Donut's handwriting.

They told me to destroy this, as they are beginning to destroy evidence of everything that happened. But I don't want to forget. I want to remember, to make sure that it never happens again. I shall disguise it as a diary and tell them I burned the 'real' book. I've always wanted a diary...

Once Pencil and Match realized that Loser had stopped reading from what was actually Donut's diary, they became uninterested and went back to their seats. Lost in her thoughts, Pencil didn't realize Loser had started to read again for a few seconds, but when she listened in and realized what Loser was reading, she began to panic a little.

"Match!" she said, almost yelling. "Loser's somehow reading something about IDFB!"

Match flinched. "What?! How did he, like, get-"

"I don't know, but we've got to stop him!"

"What's IDFB?" Liy and Stapy asked in unison.

"None of your business!" Firey Jr. snapped. Stapy raised his hands in surrender.

Pencil stood up. "We gotta lick this jawbreaker until we can make a hole large enough to stop Loser. Who's with me?"

"I'll, like, join you, of course!" Match stood up too.

8-Ball rolled out of his chair and Bracelety hopped up. "I'll join," 8B said in his monotone voice.

"ME, TOO!!" Bracelety screeched.

Match winced. "You can help us if you promise to not, like, *speak,"* she said.

"SORRY!"

"Well, I'm not gonna!" Firey Jr. crossed his arms. "Saliva just hurts me."

"David? Dora?" Pencil asked. "What about you?"

David stayed silent. Dora said, "Dadadadadadadadadada. (Let it be, Pencil. That is all in the past.)"

".. / -.. --- -. .----. - / .... .- ...- . / .- / -- --- ..- - .... --..--" Roboty beeped.

"I don't think they, like, care, Pence-Pence."

Liy spoke up. "I'm not going to help unless you tell us what IDFB is."

"Whatever. We don't need you guys," Pencil scoffed. "Now, get licking!" She, Match, Bracelety, and 8-Ball began to furiously lick the jawbreaker, intent on stopping Loser from spilling the secrets of the third season.

IDFB 1, the Yoyle Needy, moments before Ruby shatters

"I know a faster way!" Ruby called down to her friends. She jumped down the long section of space in the middle of the stairway leading down to the bottom of the Yoyle Needy. "Wheeeeee!"

"No, Ruby! You'll die!" Book called to her. But she was already falling, faster and faster, until-

Suddenly, she wasn't falling anymore. She was... floating?

Ruby opened her eyes to encounter the strangest thing she'd ever seen. She was floating in what appeared to be space. An inky black void, with nothing for endless miles, except for the twinkling of lights far, far away. But instead of all white, like the actual stars in space were, these lights each had a unique color. Some were even multi-colored.

"Hey! Ruby! Over here!"

At the sound of a voice, Ruby turned around. She was *not* expecting to see Bubble in this strange realm.

"Hi, Bubble!" They waved at each other. "It's so good to see you here! Also, where *is* here?"

Bubble shrugged. "I'm not sure, to be honest. I *do* know that we're dead, though. I guess this is where objects go when we die?"

"Well, it's a pretty cool place!" Ruby exclaimed. She spun in circles, enjoying the lack of gravity.

"I've been here before." Bubble would have scratched her head, but doing so would have caused her to pop. "The weird thing is, whenever I get recovered, I can never remember this place! But I always remember it when I die again."

"Huh." Ruby put her hands behind her head and crossed her legs. "That's weird, but I wouldn't worry about it. The world's a pretty strange place."

"Yeah..."

Suddenly, Bomby and Ice Cube both popped into existence. Icy was screaming. "-aaaaaaah!" She stopped abruptly and looked around. "Oh... I'm here again."

"You've been here, too??" Ruby asked. Bomby nodded at her.

"Yeah!" Bubble said. "Lots of people have been here. I think it might be something to do with the HPRC, because nobody remembers ever being in this place before BFDIA 4."

They continued to chat aimlessly for a couple minutes before Bubble's figure started to wobble. "Uh, Bubble," Ruby pointed out, "you're shrinking!"

"Oh, yoy, I'm being recovered!" she cheered. "I'll see you guys on the other side-" Suddenly, she disappeared.

Ruby felt herself changing, too. It felt like something was squeezing her into a long, long tube. It didn't hurt, but it was still uncomfortable. Suddenly-

She popped out of the Hand-Powered Recovery Center without an inkling of anything that just happened. "Yay!" she cheered. Pencil recovered Ice Cube as well, and the four of them (plus Book) danced together in celebration, none of them aware of the world between lives.

IDFB 2a: Double Trouble ♊

October 1st, 2016, one month after IDFB 1

Fries opened his eyes and wondered why the sun wasn't shining on his face. Then he remembered: he was in Yoyle City.

He sighed and rolled out of his borrowed bed. *When will I get used to this place?* he thought. Ever since BFDIA 6, he and the other contestants had settled down in various houses and buildings. But even after 3 years, he still depended on the rising sun to wake him up, yet it was now blocked by the buildings around him. Habits were hard to break.

Fries stepped out of his room and walked towards the elevator - which still worked, surprisingly. Golf Ball had theorized that the previous inhabitants of Yoyle City had been gone for a long, long time. There wasn't a good reason for the electricity to still be running.

The elevator *dinged* and let Fries out into the lobby of the Nice Business building. He walked out and across the street to his potato garden, where Yellow Face was standing guard. "Good morning, Yellow Face!" he called out, waving.

Yellow Face turned around. "Hello, Fries!" When Fries had finished planting the Grotato seeds Tennis Ball had given him a few weeks ago, he asked Yellow Face to stand guard when Fries couldn't so that people like Gelatin and Coiny couldn't eat them before they were ready. Yellow Face was the only one he could really trust - everyone else was too mischievous, or too busy, or too apathetic.

Yellow Face looked up, at a point above Fries' head. "Your last fry is starting to rot," he said nonchalantly. Fries felt the fry through the plastic wrap on his head and sighed. It was true. "I can't bear this for much longer," Fries muttered. "Are the potatoes ready yet?"

"Almost!" Yellow Face moved aside to reveal that the potatoes were nearly full size. In about two weeks or so, they would be ripe. Fries sighed in relief. "Good. Thank you, Yellow Face."

"No problem! While you're here, would you like to buy-"

"No thanks," Fries interrupted.

"Aw."

Something caught Fries' eye, and he turned to see what it was. Tennis Ball, Golf Ball, Nickel, Gelatin, and Rocky were rounding the corner of one of the buildings, with GB in the lead. TB was dragging the wall teleporter while talking to Nickel. Rocky was snoozing on TB's head.

Golf Ball spotted Fries and shouted, "Guys! It's time for the voting results. Come on!"

"Yeah, Fries, you don't want to be a *spoils*port," Gelatin teased, noticing the slightly rotten fry.

"I'm coming, I'm coming," Fries grunted. He turned back to Yellow Face. "Can you stay here? I still don't trust the potatoes to be safe alone."

"Yup!"

"Thanks again." Fries turned again and ran over to Golf Ball, joining the group. Together, they headed down the road, over to the Locker Of Losers in the distance.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

A few minutes later, the six of them arrived at the LOL. Pin, Needle, Coiny, and Woody were already there. Nobody was sure who had originally recovered Woody after BFDIA was cancelled, but Coiny always took care to recover him now if he died again.

Tennis Ball stopped abruptly in front of the LOL and Rocky slid off his head. "Finally!" Pin complained in her staccato voice. "We've been

waiting here for an hour!"

"Where's everyone else?" Coiny asked.

"Yellow Face is guarding my potatoes," Fries replied, then gave Coiny the evil eye. "From YOU guys, I might add. Also, I don't think anyone recovered Bomby after last episode." He made a mental note to do so after all this.

"Spongy told me he was gonna be in the pool by the Yoyle Needy," Gelatin spoke up.

Coiny groaned. "Again!? He's gone to the pool so many times now that I think he's turning into a fish!"

"Well, he *is* a sponge," Needle pointed out. "He'd like the water."

"Fair."

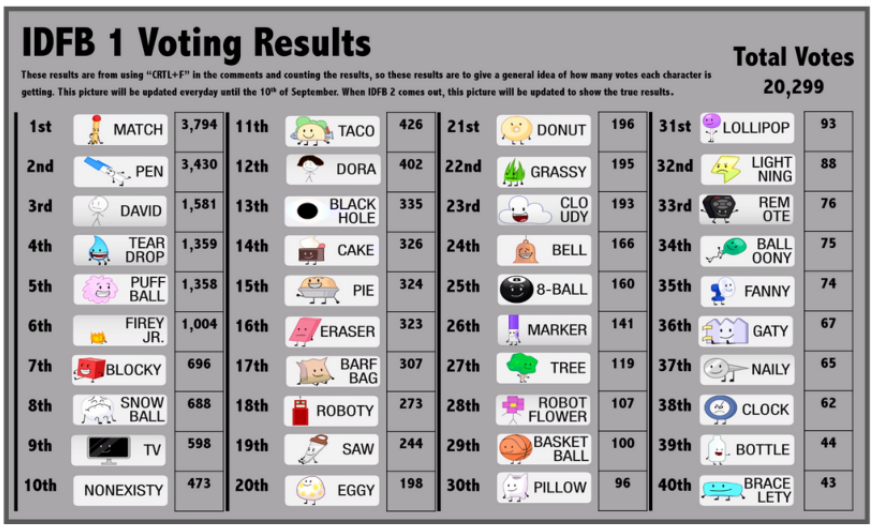
"That means we're still missing Firey and..." Gelatin counted on his fingers, then groaned. "FreeSmart." Needle flinched at the mention of FreeSmart. Several others muttered under their breaths, annoyed. They all knew where Firey was, though.

TB opened his mouth to ask if anyone knew where they were, but Nickel was one step ahead of him. "Book told me to tell you guys to start without them," he said, directing this at Golf Ball and Tennis Ball. "They were going to explore the Science Museum, or whatever that place was."

Needle jumped. "Science Museum?" she and Golf Ball said at the same time. Needle suddenly began to dash in the direction of the city. "Start without me!" she called out after her.

Golf Ball frowned. "Whatever! We don't need her, or the others. TB, do you have the voting results?"

"I do indeed!" Tennis Ball pulled out a tablet and turned it on. He swiped a couple times before settling on something. "Because the author is too lazy to write down all the individual results, I'm just going to show them in a single image."



He handed (footed?) the tablet to Golf Ball, who quickly read it and groaned. "Great. Another alliance member." She passed it to the next person. This continued until the tablet got back to Tennis Ball. Coiny sulked a little at seeing that neither Pen, Blocky, nor Snowball were going to return.

"There's something else, though," Tennis Ball said, catching everyone's attention. "Yesterday, I discovered that the second page of

instructions continues to the back of the physical page. It says that while the weaker teleport can only transport one person at a time, the stronger teleport - the one I'm about to use - is able to teleport *two* people at a time. So we can free the two most-voted for people!"

Coiny gasped. "Then Pen's coming back too?? AWESOME!" he cheered.

Golf Ball looked a little confused. "Why didn't you inform me about this, TB?"

"I wanted it to be a surprise!"

"Oh." GB looked a little flustered. "Well, thank you. It's good to hear that it will only take half the time to free everyone. Anyway, let's go!"

Without another word, Tennis Ball activated the teleporter.

"I'm BORED."

"We KNOW, Clock, you've said it 2763 times already!" Robot Flower bemoaned.

But they were all bored. They had been stuck with each other and basically nothing to do for just about three years. That gets boring.

Thankfully, the TLC wasn't really that tiny anymore. There was room for almost everyone to have a little space to themselves, except for a few small groups of people. Blocky, Eraser, and Pen had taken over one of the corners and constantly chatted with each other, usually reminiscing about the old BFDI. Snowball occasionally joined them. Cake and Eggy had played endless games of Tic-Tac-Toe together. The four mechanical minds - Remote, Roboty, Robot Flower, and TV - had claimed another corner. Lollipop and Taco were watching Saw try to, well, saw her way out. But other than that, most of them were usually alone.

"Saw!" Bell suddenly snapped at her. "Can you PLEASE stop making that annoying noise? It's grating on my ears like crazy!"

"Kinda like your voice," Firey Jr. muttered under his breath.

Saw stopped and turned to look at Bell. "Well, exCUSE me for trying to escape this blasted box!"

"Look, Saw," Black Hole spoke up. "It's been three years, and you've barely made a scratch. Just face it." He sighed. "We're never getting out of here."

".. .----. -- / ... . -. ... .. -. --. / .- / ... .. --. -. .- .-.. / ..-. .-. --- -- / --- ..- - ... .. -.. . --..--" Roboty beeped.

"I have to agree with Black Hole and Roboty here," 8-Ball said, even though he had no idea what Roboty had stated. "It's pointless. All you're doing is annoying the rest of us."

"Yeah, if you're going to saw something, saw someone annoying in half, like Match," Blocky snickered.

"Alright, that is, like, it!" Match replied, furious. She got up and snatched Saw by the handle. "Hey!" she protested. Several people gasped.

".-- .... -.-- / -.. --- . ... / -. --- -... --- -.. -.-- / . ...- . .-. / .-.. .. ... - . -. / - --- / -- . ..--.." Roboty beeped. Nobody listened to him.

"I'm, like, tired of you, Blocky." Match advanced on him, holding Saw threateningly. He tried to back away, but was already in a corner. "You are so, like, annoying. Your 'pranks' aren't even funny. All they do is hurt people!"

Eraser snorted. "Like your alliance is much better."

Match whirled around, fire in her eyes, Blocky forgotten. Eraser's eyes widened. She started to walk towards him, saying "I'm going to, like-" but then vanished into thin air. Like she was never there. Saw clattered onto the ground. "Ow!"

Everybody was stunned. They were all watching the fight, so they all saw Match disappear. A couple people fainted in shock.

Saw got up and looked around. "Where'd she go?"

Eraser breathed out, relieved. "Well, glad we won't be seeing *her* again. Right, Pen?" He turned, but Pen wasn't there anymore. Eraser glanced around the entire box, but Pen was gone, too. Nobody had noticed him disappear. "Pen?"

"-kill you! Hey, what the-?" Match tumbled from the air and landed on top of Rocky, who didn't budge. "Ow!" she complained. She heard a muffled *oof* behind her. Rubbing her head, she got up and had to squint to see, unused to the sunlight. "Wait... where am I?"

"You're free!" a familiar voice said. Match turned around to find everyone staring at her. "Tennis Ball and I found a machine," Golf Ball continued, pointing at the wall teleporter, "and it was able to teleport you and Pen out of the Tiny loser Chamber. So now you are free!"

"We're free? WOOHOO!" Pen cheered to Match's right. He knelt down and kissed the ground, then ran over to Tennis Ball and Golf Ball and hugged them both. "Thank you thank you thank you!" GB squirmed out of Pen's grasp.

"Does anyone, like, know where Pence-Pence and the rest of my alliance is?" Match asked the general crowd. Most of them just shrugged, but Nickel said, "Yeah, they went into the Science Museum. Needle followed them in just a couple minutes ago."

"But I don't, like, even know where the Science Museum *is*."

"Rocky does!" TB patted Rocky on the head, who turned and began to head into the city. "Follow him and you'll be set!"

Match let out a little puff of air. "I can't believe I have to, like, follow *Rocky*. But whatever, I guess." She had to jog to catch up to him, as he was moving surprisingly quickly.

TB looked at the wall teleporter. "Well, I suppose it's time to get this thing charging again." The others who had come to watch began to disperse, but he and GB stayed there a bit longer. "Do you think we should somehow let the other eliminated contestants know that we're

trying to free them?" Tennis Ball asked.

Golf Ball thought for a bit. "I don't believe we should bother," she finally responded. "They've probably already figured it out from Match's and Pen's disappearance."

"Good point." They followed the others into the city.

The Yoyle City Science Museum, 5 minutes ago

The door of the Science Museum creaked open an inch, slowly, and an eye peeked through the hole to look at the darkness beyond. "It seems safe enough," said a voice. The door opened further, revealing the speaker to be Pencil. Book, Bubble, Ice Cube, and Ruby followed close behind her as she entered.

"Why can't we be with the others?" Ice Cube complained.

"Look, ever since I saw GB and TB go in here a few weeks ago, I've been curious about what's in here," said Pencil. "Today, my curiosity just got the better of me. And like it or not, you're in the alliance."

Ice Cube grumbled something unintelligible. Book walked up next to Pencil. "Hey," she started, keeping her voice low so that the others wouldn't hear. "Icy was really looking forward to seeing who would return from the TLC. Could you at least promise that we can go next time?"

"Fiiiiine." Pencil gritted her teeth. "But it's not like there's many people in there who we'd want to come back, anyway."

"Oh my bubble blower," Bubble interrupted, making them lose their train of thought. She pointed to a sign on the wall. "There's so many exhibits here!"

"How do you know, Bubble?" Ruby inquired cheerfully. "Aren't you unable to count past three or something?"

Bubble glared at Pencil. "Despite contrary beliefs, I *can* count past three," she replied, now annoyed. She glanced at the point on top of

the giant, multicolored dodecahedron displayed in the middle of the room, shuddered, and turned to study the four vases lined up against one wall instead. "What do you think happened to the fifth one?" she asked, pointing to an empty space in the middle.

Pencil shrugged. "Don't know, don't particularly care. There's nothing interesting in this room - let's head into the rest of the museum to find the cooler stuff!"

Book decided not to mention the words *STOP HER* written in the wall in what appeared to be blood. Apparently Pencil didn't find that interesting.

The five of them began to climb the stairs to the next exhibit, but in doing so, inadvertently tripped an invisible laser in front of the first step. When it detected movement, the laser sent a signal to the camera room computer, which in turn began to reactivate the cameras. Dozens of red lights silently winked on all across the museum as various cameras woke from their slumber. Without making a sound, they started to follow FreeSmart's movements in the hallways. None of them noticed that anything had activated.

But the computer did something else. Along with reawakening the security system, it sent a signal to the beings who had built the computer, long ago, before the city was abandoned.

The signal was sent a long way away from Yoyleland.

Deep into outer space.

The museum was waking up, and someone had noticed.

Oh look, an update! Yay!

Really though, I hoped this could have been done within a week of the prologue releasing, but oh well. The online programming camp I'm in (and will be in for another week or so) is taking up more of my time than I thought.

But I hope that, when it's finished, I'm able to update this around once a week. Hopefully. I'll try.

I have lots of stuff planned for this story, so stay tuned!

IDFB 2b: Museum Mysteries ?

The second floor of the Science Museum had a ton of gadgets, but the first thing Pencil spotted was a cool-looking gun. She rushed over to check it out as the others entered the room behind her. The back half was white with a black stripe down the middle, and the middle was a glass tube. The front was black with a layer of white at the bottom, and it had three antenna-like levers sticking out, with a wire connecting each of the antennas to the back. There was no discernible handle or trigger. Pencil turned the hole to her face and began to look down the barrel.

Book picked up a small packet of papers that was next to the gun and read from it. "The Aperture Science Handheld Portal Device: Instruction Manuel."

Pencil's fingers accidentally found the trigger and pressed it. Seeing a blue glow light up the barrel of the portal gun from the inside, she jerked her head away as it shot out a stream of blue sparks. They hit the white ceiling above her with a *swoosh* and created a pulsing oval of blue energy that stuck there. The glass cylinder in the middle was now shining blue as well.

Book sighed. "Literally the first rule in here says to 'never look at the operational end of the device.'"

Looking slightly sheepish, Pencil set down the gun and turned to look around the room more. There were several objects on display, many more than in the first room. Some of the exhibits included a calculator, a baking soda volcano, a potato-powered battery, a pixelly pickaxe, a vase with a golden flower, and some form of a broken perpetual motion machine. In the middle of the room there were two large objects on display: a statue of some soldier, who's anatomy reminded Pencil suspiciously of David, and a large blue police call box.

"Hold up." Something suddenly occurred to Pencil. "Book, since when can you read Yoylese?"

"Didn't you know? I'm a Yoylese-to-English translation guide."

Pencil eyed her suspiciously. "Just how many books *are* you?"

Book opened her mouth to reply but got interrupted by Ruby. "What's this?" They turned to see her inspecting an unimpressive archway tucked into a corner of the room. "It looks like it's supposed to be an entrance to something." The arch was on a slightly raised pedestal, which Ruby stepped onto. She knocked on the wall, apparently looking for a hidden door. "Nothing. Dang it." She stepped off and Ice Cube sat down on the edge of the pedestal.

Bubble went to the left side of the archway and found a control panel. "Huh, there are some buttons here."

"Ooh, buttons?" Ruby asked excitedly. "Move aside!" She popped Bubble and took her place. Wiggling her fingers in anticipation, she started to press random buttons willy-nilly. A previously invisible light at the apex of the archway blinked on, first glowing red, then slowly changed to orange. The machine began to hum.

"Uhh, Ruby, you might want to be careful," Pencil warned. The light was yellow now, and the archway was shaking slightly.

"Huh?" Ruby stopped pressing buttons. Ice Cube tried to stand up, but accidentally fell backwards onto the pedestal. Suddenly, the light turned green, and the archway emitted a *ding!* Ice Cube turned purple and dissolved.

"Icy!" Book shouted. She reached her hand out as if that would bring Ice Cube back.

"Eh, it could have been worse," droned Pencil.

"Worse?! Pencil, Ice Cube might be in danger! We have to go rescue her!"

Pencil grunted. "No we don't."

"But she's in our alliance!"

"*My* alliance," Pencil corrected. "And she's just an alternate. So are you," she added.

Book groaned. "Well, you owe her for not letting her see who came back from the TLC today."

Pencil threw her hands up in exasperation. "Fine! Whatever! Let's go find her. But after we do, I'm kicking both of you out of the alliance!"

"Fine!"

"Fine!" Pencil hopped up on the platform underneath the archway. "Ruby, since you caused this, you have to stay behind and teleport us to wherever Ice Cube went."

Ruby saluted as Book climbed up next to Pencil. "Aye aye, ma'am!" She thought for a moment, then did her best to press the buttons she thought she pressed last time. Once again, the archway hummed and shook, and the light at the top turned green. Pencil's vision went purple, but right before it did, she could have sworn she saw someone enter the room... Match?

She and Book dissolved into violet light.

When Match and Rocky arrived at the museum, they found Needle standing in the first room, staring at a spot on the floor. "What's up?" asked Match.

Needle shook her head. "I- I swear I saw Evil Leafy! Right here!" She pointed to a patch of floor that looked exactly like the rest. "But when I turned to look again, she was gone!"

Match shuddered. "Uhg. I hope that we don't, like, have to see *her* ever again. Anyway, have you seen Pencil come in here?"

Needle snapped out of her funk. "Uh, yeah, that was actually why I came in here. I think they're on the next floor."

The three of them hurried up the stairs, cameras silently watching them the whole way. Match reached the top of the steps first to find Pencil standing underneath an archway, their eyes locking for less than a second before Pencil vanished in a shower of violet particles. "Pencil!"

"Match!" Ruby barreled towards her and gave her a big hug. "You're back!"

"Where did Pencil go?" Match demanded, pushing Ruby off her. Neither of them noticed Needle muttering to herself fervently.

"I don't know," Ruby admitted. The gem quickly explained what had happened.

"Well then, you're going to have to, like, send me through too!" Match said after Ruby finished. She stormed up to the pedestal and stepped on. Rocky followed her on without her seeing.

"I- I don't think that's s-such a good idea," Needle stammered nervously.

Ruby started pressing buttons as Match scoffed. "Wow, you're *such* a scaredy-match, Needy."

Needle saw red and ran over to slap her, not noticing that she was now under the archway. "DON'T call me-"

Ruby slapped her hand on the final button, and with a *shwoop,* Needle, Match, and Rocky vanished.

"Oh man, Pen, it's so good to talk to you again!"

"Thanks! It feels awesome to finally be free of that prison," Pen replied to Coiny. "The sun on my face... it's almost heavenly."

The two of them, along with Pin, were traversing through the streets of Yoyle City. Coiny and Pin had been catching Pen up on everything that happened in BFDIA. Coiny was just explaining how Puffball got eliminated when they came across Fries' farm.

Pin pointed. "Look! The grotatoes are ready!"

Coiny stopped talking and began to salivate. "Oh boy, I can't wait to have some!"

Yellow Face was in the garden, but he had his back turned to them. Coiny tried to creep in, but Yellow Face whirled around and pointed an orange and black gun at Coiny. "Don't even try."

Coiny froze and slowly backed away. "Dude," Pen said, "why do you have a *gun?*"

"It's a Lava Rifle™!" Yellow Face replied excitedly. "Ever needed something to protect your valuables with? For only $73, YOU can use one of these to fight off intruders by shooting a stream of lava at them!"

"I thought Yellow Face Inc. didn't sell weapons," asked Pen.

"Yeah, you're right," Yellow Face admitted. "I found this in the Science Museum."

"Man, that thing keeps popping up in conversations all the time these days," Pin noted. "How did it become so popular?"

Pen shrugged. "I've never even heard of this museum before today. Or been in Yoyleland, for that matter. I still can't get over the fact that the grass here is *purple!*"

"Oh, just wait until you see the Yoyle Needy!" Coiny gushed, potatoes forgotten. He stepped out of the garden and continued to explain how they had gotten stuck in Yoyle City, leading them to the Yoyle Needy. Yellow Face stashed away his lava rifle for later and pulled out a watering can. He had some plants to take care of.

Intriguing...

What is it?

That "alliance"... they've made it farther than we've anticipated.

How so?

Well, most of them are onboard. They're searching for the first one that went through the telepod accidentally; the chunk of ice. I've teleported her to holding cell 3.

That is *intriguing. Shall we stop them?*

Let's not. I want to let them think that they're in control for now.

Do you think they'll find us?

Oh, most definitely. But we'll be ready, of course.

A violet spark fizzled into existence. It widened, taking the shape of something tall. Limbs formed, then their normal colors returned, revealing the figure to be Pencil. At the same time, another purple line next to her opened up and changed into something shorter but wider - Book.

The purple aura around them faded with a soft *pop,* and they blinked in confusion, trying to think about what exactly had just happened. After a few seconds of silent thought, they decided it didn't matter and looked around their surroundings.

The two of them were in a large room, larger than they had ever seen a single room to be. It looked like it could hold several airplanes in there with room to spare. The lights embedded in the ceiling were on but dimmed down. To their left was a smaller glass box with what appeared to be a control panel inside, and directly ahead of them was a doorless exit leading out into a more well-lit corridor.

Pencil quickly glanced at each part of the room a second time. "I don't see Ice Cube here," she stated. "Oh well, we tried. Let's go back home."

"No!" Book shouted, poking a finger in Pencil's face. "We are NOT leaving until we find Icy!"

Pencil got furious. "What do you even see in her?? She's so-"

"-NEEDY!" a familiar voice cut them off from behind. They both turned around in astonishment, then Pencil gasped, her anger instantly forgotten. Needle, Match, and Rocky had suddenly materialized just a few feet away. They were glowing purple slightly, but it faded almost instantly.

Needle stopped in confusion. "Wait, what the heck?"

"PENCIL!" Match shouted. "MATCH!" Pencil shouted back. Match ran over to Pencil and gave her a huge hug. "I missed you sooooooo much! The TLC is, like, SUPER boring, and there's nobody I even like in there!"

Pencil hugged her back. "I missed you too, Match! Did you mean to follow us?"

Match pulled out of the hug. "Well, duh! Ruby told us what had happened and I, like, decided to follow you because I wanted to see you again! And also cause we're in an alliance." Match made a face. "These two just followed me, though. I don't know why they even, like, bothered."

Pencil looked behind Match to see Rocky waiting patiently on the ground and Needle muttering to herself. "No, no, no," she was saying. "It's happening now?! I didn't realize it would be so soon!"

"What's she on about?" Book asked, now curious.

Match seemed to notice Book for the first time. "Idk, she's been saying stuff like that for a few minutes now."

Needle stopped and glared at her. "You wouldn't understand."

"Like, try me," Match taunted. Needle crossed her arms but stayed silent.

Book groaned. "We don't have time for this. I'm going to go find Ice Cube, and I'm not waiting for you guys any longer." With that, she turned on her heels and walked into the hallway. Match looked at Pencil, who shrugged. They followed Book, with Needle and Rocky close behind.

They're getting closer.

Shall we go meet them?

I don't see why not.

There were lots of doorways, and Ice Cube wasn't in any of them.

After taking several turns in the same hallway, they came across a split - paths that led to the left and right. They took the left path and came across a long hallway with several doors on each side. Some were locked, others weren't. But Ice Cube was nowhere to be found in any of them.

"Arg! This is so frustrating!" Book slammed another door shut. "Where IS she?? She couldn't have possibly gone so far in just a few minutes!"

"Maybe she took the path to the right," Match suggested, opening a door and glancing in it. "This one's empty, too..."

Pencil lazily opened a door, then closed it again, not bothering to look inside. "Whatever. Let's backtrack a bit, I guess, and head down that other corridor. Ice Cube *obviously* isn't here," she said, shooting a glance at Book, "so let's stop wasting time."

Book closed another door and sighed. "Yeah, I suppose so."

Two doors in front of her, the last one on the right side, Rocky walked out of a room, wearing a tinfoil hat. Needle poked her head out. "Hey, guys. You should see this."

"We don't have time, Nee-"

"No, I mean it! Come look!" Needle's usually soft voice was stern, but they weren't listening. So she grabbed Pencil and pulled her into the room. "Hey! Let go of- whoa! Guys, come check this out!"

Match and Book ran into the room and stopped dead in their tracks,

jaws dropping open. The room itself was unimpressive - full of crates, probably nothing more than storage. But the far wall had a huge window installed, and outside was an inky blackness, peppered by twinkling lights, as far as the eye can see. Right in the middle of the void, however, was a green-and-blue planet, recognizable to most.

"Oh... my... library," Book stuttered. "We're in space! And that's Earth right there!"

"I can see Goiky!" Pencil pointed towards two continents separated by a large canal. "It's right below us!" She frowned. "That means we're floating right above Yoyleland. How come we couldn't see this ship before?"

That's because we're too far away for the naked eye to see from ground level, said a voice behind them.

All four whirled around to find nothing less than an alien - a couple of inches taller than Pencil - gazing at them with extreme interest. But Pencil realized that she recognized it - sort of. It had the same sort of anatomy as the statue of the soldier in the museum, who Pencil now recognized as the same species that David was. If this alien looked like the soldier (in a sense), and the soldier was similar to David, then that meant-

"You're a human!" Pencil gasped.

hehehehe cliffhanger hehehehe

You know how I said it would probably take me at least a week for each chapter? Weeeeeell I got a sudden burst of motivation and completed this part in like 3 days lmao

The next chapter will likely be a bit shorter and it'll definitely be the last part for this "episode"

Once again, stay tuned :)

IDFB 2c: Stranger Danger ⚠

"Tennis Ball! I have an idea!"

"Huh?" Tennis Ball stopped tinkering with the wall teleporter and looked at Golf Ball. She had a twinkle in her eyes.

"You remember my factory from BFDIA?"

"Yeah, what about it?"

"I think we should find a way to move it to Yoyleland!"

TB just blinked. "How in the world would we do that? It's HUGE, and it's also 2763 miles away!"

"That's the point! It would be something new to keep us occupied! Seeing as how we can't use the Science Museum for scientific purposes."

"But-"

"Come on! I'm sure we can figure it out together." GB sounded like she was almost pleading, which was extremely unlike her.

Tennis Ball sighed. "Alright. But first, we have to either teach someone else to use this-" he gestured to the wall teleporter. "-or set up something that would automatically read the voting results and free someone from the TLC. If we go back to South Goiky, the trip will take several months, and we won't be here to use the wall teleporter."

Golf Ball *hmmed*. "You're right. I'll start working on an advanced timer immediately!" She rushed out of the front yard and into their unnamed house - one they had claimed in BFDIA 6, only a couple blocks away from the HPRC.

TB set the wall teleporter down on the grass and sighed. Something was seriously wrong with Golf Ball, something to do with the museum. He kept meaning to ask her what had happened in there, but something always got in the way.

The sports ball let his mind wander and remembered FreeSmart. *I wonder if they had better luck in the museum than we did?* he thought.

"You're a human!" Pencil blurted without thinking. The others glanced at her, then looked back at the alien, perhaps noticing the similarities between it and David.

Very astute, Pencil, the creature spoke. It wasn't exactly talking, per se, at least not out loud. While the creature had a mouth, it didn't appear to use it. The words vibrated within everyone's minds, as if the human simply willed for them to hear words and it happened. *Not all objects would have recognized what I am. Golf Ball and Tennis Ball would have, perhaps.*

"W-who are you?" Needle stammered slightly.

My name is-

"Let me guess. Your name is, like, Humany?" Match drawled.

The alien paused. *No, but that* is *a nickname of mine, funnily enough. My actual name is Seekayaitch.*

And I'm Emwhyaitch! A second human popped their head into the doorway of the room, startling the objects inside.

"Are there more of you?" questioned Match. "And do they all have, like, an 'aitch' at the end of their name?"

We're the only ones on this ship, if that's what you mean, Seekayaitch answered. *However, there are lots more of us dotted around the galaxy. And the reason that the last part of our names sound similar is because we're brothers.*

He's two minutes older than I am, Emwhyaitch admitted.

Some of our friends have similar names - Kaybee, Essaitch, Emar, Aykay... but that's just coincidence. Seekayaitch seemed to realize he was going on a tangent. *That doesn't matter, though. Come!* He stepped aside so the doorway was clear and gestured towards it. *We'll give you a tour of the ship.*

Pencil was suspicious. "How can we trust you?"

Emwhyaitch shrugged. *There are cameras on the ship - we've seen you guys since you arrived here. We could have killed you a dozen times by now.*

"Fair enough..." Although she still didn't fully trust the two humans, she decided to go with them, as that's what everyone else was doing.

Seekayaitch exited the storage room and immediately tripped over Rocky, but caught himself before he hit the ground. *I almost forgot Rocky was here, heh.* He picked him up. *Hey, little guy!*

Rocky vomited in his face in response.

Seekayaitch dropped Rocky and furiously wiped his face off with his sleeve while Emwhyaitch laughed (out loud) hysterically at him. *Uhg.* Seekayaitch stole Rocky's tinfoil hat and wiped the last of the vomit off. *I forgot he could do that, too.*

The seven of them began to walk back down the hallway - Emwhyaitch and Book in the front, Match and Pencil in the back, and Needle, Rocky, and Seekayaitch in between the others.

"Hey, Emwhya? Er, Emiaitch, myaitch, hemmy-" Book stuck her tongue out. "Gah, your name's hard to say. Can I just call you guys Em and C?"

Sure.

"Thanks. Anyway, Em, I was wondering if either of you had seen our friend? Her name's Ice Cube, she's a giant ice cube, about a third shorter than me?" Book raised her hand to show the height she meant.

They both shook their heads. *We haven't seen anyone like her on our*

cameras, Em replied.

"That's weird..."

"You know what's weird? C, you sort of sound like, like, me," Match noted.

C chuckled out loud. "What??" Match demanded, putting her hands on her 'hips.'

Oh, nothing, C replied in their minds. He chuckled again and turned his head towards her, smiling. It wasn't unfriendly, but it wasn't exactly a reassuring smile, either. Match shivered a tiny bit. *Just a joke that you wouldn't get.* He turned his eyes forward again and started whistling.

As they turned a corner and took the path the the objects hadn't taken yet, Pencil sped up her pace until it matched C's. "What are you guys even doing near Earth, anyway?"

C stopped whistling and fake pouted. *What, can't a guy visit his home planet every now and then?*

"You lived on Earth, once?"

They heard a sharp intake of air from Needle. "Wait," she said, "are *you* guys the founders of Yoyleland?"

Em laughed. *No, not us. Yoyleland was there long before we were born. But humans, yes.* He spread his arms out towards a window as they they passed by it, Earth shining below them. *Earth is where humans originated.*

We left the planet centuries ago, C responded. *As you can clearly see by the spaceship. We migrated to lots of other planets, and now we can be found all over the Goiky Way.*

Em 'spoke' again. *Our ancestors polluted the planet like you wouldn't believe. Smoggy skies , trash-filled oceans, the extinction of nearly all the animal species... Yoyleland's unique purple grass is actually the result of a failed experiment. Scientists were trying to see if they could engineer a biological virus that would heal the environment, and it did - but it also*

turned the grass purple and somehow changed the berries that grew there so that whoever ate one would turn into metal.

C took the stage once more. *Turned out that the purple grass was toxic to humans, although the yoyleberries were somehow fine. Despite the whole, you know, "turning to metal" part. So that's why the city was originally abandoned. It was actually one of the turning points in human history - unable to fix our planet, we were forced to flee to the stars soon after.*

Since then, Earth has managed to heal itself. Humans have visited from time to time, like us, but everyone decided that we should probably leave the planet alone for the most part. No repopulating it.

Pencil thought back to when she and the rest of FreeSmart had explored various parts of the city. In nearly every house and building they went into, it had looked like the previous inhabitants had left in a rush. Tables were set, cupboards were left open, and items were scattered about the floor.

"Thanks for, like, the history-slash-geography lesson," Match said, snapping Pencil out of her mind, "but is there a kitchen aboard this ufo? I'm, like, craving something salty." With a start, Pencil realized that she had the same craving. Objects never needed to eat, they only ever ate food for their own pleasure - but occasionally, they could get cravings for something.

Of course we have a kitchen, C protested. *Five thousand years and we may have learned the secrets of space travel and communicating telepathically-* he tapped the side of his head. *-but we somehow haven't figured out yet how to provide easy nourishment without simply eating.*

Apologies, Em said. *That's a side effect of going through the telepod. Our control room is right up ahead, and to the side of it is a kitchen.*

After another minute of walking and turning corners - *this place is huge,* Pencil thought to herself - they reached a locked door. Em put his hand on a pad next to it, and it rose through the ceiling, revealing a largeish room with a window for the front wall. In front of it was a big set of controls with so many dials and buttons and levers that it made Pencil dizzy. At least the labels were in English.

The rest of the room wasn't that impressive. The walls were a dull shade of grey, and there were two chairs attached to the floor in front of the control panel. On the left wall were two doorways, one labeled "bathroom" and the other labeled "kitchen," and on the right wall was another door - locked, Pencil assumed - that said "NO UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ALLOWED."

Em gestured towards the kitchen. *Be our guest,* he said. Pencil gave in to her urges and rushed in, the other four objects right behind her. She had to open three cabinets before finding anything salty - a stash of chip bags, colored completely orange-yellow. Thankful that she was one of the taller objects, she reached up and nabbed an armful of bags, tossing one to each object. She, Match, and Needle ripped open their bags and started to chomp on the triangular chips.

Book almost opened hers, then put her hand to her 'chin' in a thoughtful manner. She opened the fridge and rummaged around inside it until she found what she was looking for. "Bingo!" She triumphantly held up a jar of nacho cheese and began to look for a bowl.

Meanwhile, Rocky picked up his chip bag and swallowed it whole. "Hey! Don't choke on that, Rocky!" Needle mumbled through a mouthful of crunchy goodness.

Oh, don't worry. He'll be fine. Seekayaitch had just walked into the room and somehow managed to conjure a grain bar, which he was now munching on. *He's able to digest basically anything. I thought of that when creating him.*

All the objects (except Rocky) froze. Needle's mouth hung open, and the chip that was on its way to her mouth dropped to the floor. Any cravings were instantly forgotten.

"S-sorry," Pencil stuttered, very unlike her. "But *WHAT!?!*"

C froze too, realizing what he had let slip. *Oh. Eh. Oops?*

"You created Rocky?" Book questioned. "D-does this mean that... you created *us,* too?"

C looked furious at himself. He gently set down the grain bar. *I can explain.*

They waited.

Actually, C said after a moment, *it would be easier to explain while you're constrained. Emwhyaitch, can you grab the freeze juice?*

"EXCUSE me?!" Pencil shouted. She surged forward and tried to leave the kitchen, but C grabbed her wrist. *Oh no you don't.*

Match came out of nowhere and punched C in the face. He let go of Pencil instinctively and fell over. "Don't like, touch my friend!" Pencil looked at Match with a new appreciation.

"Out of my way!" Needle shoved past them, only to bump into Em, who immediately stabbed a syringe full of freeze juice into her. She turned to ice and froze (for real, this time). The last thing Pencil remembered before blacking out was seeing a similar-looking syringe flying towards her face.

Match awoke with a start, quickly noticing that she wasn't in her bed. She was lying on a table that was mostly vertical, but leaning backwards. Her arms and legs were trapped by metal bands that were attached to the table. After struggling for a second, she realized it was useless and decided to look around instead.

They were in some sort of laboratory. The walls were the same shade of grey as the control room of the ufo was, indicating that she was still on the ship. But otherwise, it looked like a stereotypical lab - counters with sinks and Bunsen burners, shelves and cabinets full of test tubes and beakers, and various machines and devices lying on the counters and floor. Papers were also strewn everywhere. It was properly messy.

"Uhg... where... are we?"

Match heard a voice and looked to her left. "Pence-pence!" she cried. Pencil was strapped to the same sort of table that Match was. "Are you ok?"

Pencil groaned. "A little headachey, but fine-" She noticed her restraints. "Hey, what the heck?"

Match noticed a familiar-looking chunk of solid water farther back, behind Pencil. "Ice Cube? Is that, like, you?"

I'm afraid to say that Ice Cube is unconscious, a voice reverberated in her mind. From behind her platform to the right, Emwhyaitch emerged. *However, no harm has come to her. We simply were unable to use the freeze juice on her, so we had to chloroform her instead.* He winced. *Speaking of which, my brother is also unconscious. Seems like you have quite a right hook, Match.*

Em moved out of the way, and Match glanced to the spot he was standing in front of. Book, Needle, and Rocky were constrained in the same way she and Pencil were, awake and probably scared but seemingly unhurt.

Match steeled her resolve and glared at Em. "What do you, like, want from us?"

Em stopped, then responded. *Before I come to that, I'm sure you're dying to know if I really created you or not.*

"Well?" Pencil, fully awake now, seethed with anger. "Spit it out!"

Very well. It's true, my brother and I created you, almost seven years ago now. Even though she was halfway expecting this, it still shocked Match into silence. *When Seekayaitch and I discovered how to create sentient objects,* Em continued, *we were ecstatic. There were so many possibilities! We could become famous!*

That last part never came true, unfortunately. Us being the humans we are, we just created a game show instead. A competition, inspired by Total Drama Island. Twenty inanimate objects, each battling for an island to call their own.

"You created us for a *game show?"* Needle spluttered. "Like- like we were some sort of experiments?"

You were, in a way. We built the Announcer, programmed him with several different contest ideas, placed you all on Earth, and just let it

happen. If it makes you feel any better, you have always had free will - we never interfered, except when we needed to send you an Announcer Recovery Center. The show started out slowly, but eventually grew in popularity. Em snorted. *Coincidentally, our first successful subject, Firey, was the one who won.*

"Did you create us, too?" Book spoke up. "The recommended characters from BFDI 17?"

Em shrugged. *I have absolutely no clue where all the recommended characters came from - it seems like the mere presence of objects eventually creates more objects.*

"Like we'd believe you."

The human waved his hand dismissively and pulled a remote out of his pocket, tapping a few buttons. *Believe me or not, it's the truth. But I've said too much - I can't let you guys go back and spill all the secrets of your creation to the other objects.*

"What are you going to, like, do? Kill us?" Match snorted. "You must realize that we'd, like, just remember everything when we get recovered."

I know, Em hummed in their brains. *I designed the recovery centers, remember?* He tapped his remote again, and Match heard whirring sounds. She looked up and saw an upside-down colander with various wires sticking out of it lowering from the ceiling. There were five other colanders coming down as well, one above each object. They stopped when they were covering everyone's heads.

Instead, I'll simply erase your memories.

Match shuddered. *Sorry, I didn't mean all of them,* Em said. *Just from when you guys went into the museum right up until now. And I guess 'simple' isn't the right word for it.* If Em still spoke with his mouth, he would be grumbling. *Stupid process takes a whole month...*

The machines began to hum loudly. *One last thing.* He looked Match in the eye. *You wanted to know why my brother 'sounds' like you? It's because he poured his voice into you, all those years ago.*

Match blacked out.

This is probably the most motivation I've had for something in a while LMAO

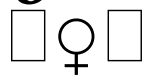
But yeah, I was just super excited to write about the humans and stuff. Have you figured out who they are? It should be really obvious ;)

Anyway, this "episode" is over! The first part of the next one will definitely take more time, as I still have to figure out some chunks of it.

In case you didn't read the A/N chapter, I'll be choosing who emerges from the TLC each "episode" myself. Should be fun!

See you in IDFB 3 :)

IDFB 3a: Forgotten Memories



Hello, brother. How are you?

I'm doing fine, thank you. I've completely healed now. Who knew a single match could cause so much damage?

Well, they can *start fires.*

That's not what I meant and you know it. How's the memory wipe going?

It's nearly complete, but there's one problem. For some reason, it's not working on Rocky.

Huh. That rock has always been an enigma. It should be fine, however, as he never says anything. I think he forgot how to speak.

Very well then. I will send them back down within the hour.

Many, many miles away from Yoyleland - 2763 miles, to be precise - there was a flower.

She was a lonely flower. She had very few friends to speak of, but they weren't around. Almost everyone she had ever known was a couple thousand miles away north.

So she decided to make some friends of her own.

"Hey, Flower! I think you look beautiful!" Flower gushed, imitating Ice Cube's voice. "Why thank you, Ice Cube!" she responded to herself with a smile. She set the ice cube that she was holding down onto the

grass and picked up a match. Imitating Match's voice, she asked herself "Gosh, Flower, you're so, like, pretty! Will you, like, join our alliance?"

"Of course I will!" Dropping the match, she hefted up the deactivated Firey Speaker Box with an *oof*. She turned it so that the wire mesh that was his 'mouth' was facing her. She had drawn a smiley face on it. "Oh, Flower!" she said with a scratchy voice, doing a good impression of Firey. "You're so wonderful and gorgeous! There's no need for competition anymore, you win Dream Island!"

"Hooray! I win, I win, I... win..." Her smile slowly dropped from her face. She sat down heavily, sighing and setting the Firey Speaker Box on her lap. "Oh, for petal's sake," she grumbled miserably. "I can't take this anymore. The loneliness is driving me MAD! And it's MAKING me mad!" She growled, suddenly furious at everyone else for leaving her over three years earlier behind her back. "I mean, who even LIKES yoyleberries?!"

Flower tore out a petal in frustration, which instantly grew back. But after a minute, she calmed down and got an idea. "I know!" she shouted, standing up and knocking the Firey Speaker Box off of her lap. "I'll go there myself! Then I'll never be lonely again! Even constantly being aggravated at the stupidity of other objects would be better than this." She grinned, her anger forgotten.

Flower rummaged through the chest of supplies that Firey Speaker Box used for contests until she found a backpack, an inflatable dinghy, a collapsible oar, and an axe (for Evil Leafy encounters). Shoving the boat and oar to the bottom of the pack, she placed the Firey Speaker Box on top so that he would poke out and patted his head.

Flower hoisted the backpack onto her back, rested the axe on her shoulder, and set off for adventure.

Many, many miles away from Yoyleland - 2763 miles, to be precise - there was a flower.

She was a lonely flower. She had very few friends to speak of, but they weren't around. Almost everyone she had ever known was a couple thousand miles away north.

So she decided to go find them.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

November 1st

It was late morning, and most of the free objects were gathered around Tennis Ball and Golf Ball. The only ones missing were Bubble, Pencil, Match, Needle, Book, Ice Cube, and Rocky.

Coiny tapped Fries on the head. "Hey Fries." Fries turned and Coiny gasped. "Hey, you finally got your fries back!" he pointed out. "Are there any grotatoes left over for me?"

Fries sighed. "Yes, actually. I overestimated how many potatoes I needed, and there's enough for everyone to have some. But!" Fries placed his index finger on Coiny's mouth to shush him, as he was about to say something. "You can't have them until later tonight, when I invite everyone else over to the Nice Business building."

"Aww, but at the same time, yesss!" Coiny whooped. "Anyway, I wanted to ask you something. Have you seen Needle lately? She's been missing since Pen and Match got released, and I'm starting to get worried."

Fries thought about it, then hiccuped. "You know, I actually haven't seen her recently. Huh." He paused again. "Come to think of it, I haven't seen most of FreeSmart for a while, either. Or Rocky!"

"Well, Ruby's here, but that's still odd-"

"Ok, everyone, listen up!" Golf Ball spoke loudly, and the chatter died down. "Tennis Ball and I are leaving for the old competing grounds tomorrow for scientific research. We will likely be gone for many months, so we have set up a timer for the wall teleporter." She gestured with her foot towards said device, which was now on some

sort of tripod. "It will automatically read the votes and pull out the two most voted for objects on the first of every month, at noon." GB checked a small screen on the machine. "Which should be happening... now!"

The wall teleporter beeped, flashed green, and two objects appeared in midair, landing on the ground. Teardrop, and a flatter, dual-colored object. They got up and looked around in wonder.

"Hello! You must be Pie!" Tennis Ball said to the flatter object.

"That's correct," Pie confirmed. "Where are we?"

"We're in Yoyleland! The land of yoyleberries and great discovery!" Golf Ball stated. "We have freed you from the Locker Of Losers!"

"Well, that's a relief. Is that what happened to Match and Pen?"

"Uh, yeah," TB replied. "Didn't you guys guess that already?"

"No! You didn't tell us anything! Everyone went crazy after Match and Pen disappeared into thin air with no explanation. And they were already crazy!"

"Alright, yeesh, calm down," Golf Ball grumbled. She turned to Tennis Ball. "I suppose we'll have to send a signal to one of the mechanical minds in the LOL. TB, do you know where we can find a computer?"

"Yeah! There's some in the Nice Business building that Fries sleeps in. We can use one of those!"

"Great!" GB turned back around to face the others. "Everyone, please DON'T touch the wall teleporter! It will work fine on its own, and Tennis Ball and I won't be around to fix it if one of you bumbling fools breaks it. Got that?" Various people nodded in silence, interrupted only by a hiccup from Fries, and they started to disperse.

Teardrop rushed towards the city, eager to explore, when Pin bumped into her. "Oh, Teardrop, wait!" Pin exclaimed. "I want to tell you something." TD stopped and did a double take when she noticed that Pin had lost her color. She crossed her arms, looking annoyed.

"I want to apologize for not calling you a 'real contestant,' back in BFDIA 2. That was rude, and I feel really bad about it." Pin wrung her hands together. "Can you... forgive me?"

Teardrop thought for a second, then smiled and gave a thumbs up. Pin sighed in relief. "Phew! I was worried I had ruined our friendship. Thank you!"

TD pointed at Pin, then herself, then Yoyle City. "Oh, do you want me to show you around the city?" Teardrop nodded eagerly. "Well, then, let's go! The first stop is..." Her voice trailed away as they followed the rest of the objects down into the cluster of buildings.

Bubble was used to the void by now. After all, it was the only thing she could see, and all that she had seen for the past month. The rainbow lights that twinkled softly in the distance were no longer a wonder, but simply a bore. For a short time after her popping a month ago, Bomby was with her, and they played Spongycake until he was recovered. But nobody had recovered Bubble. Since then, she had been alone with her thoughts. Every day - or so she estimated, as it was impossible to tell - she wondered what had happened to her friends, and why they hadn't recovered her.

Bubble was considering simply going mad when a new, bright flash of red caught her eye. She glanced to the left, but whatever it was had already disappeared.

She sighed in disappointment, but not even a second after, something else shimmered in front of her. A fold in the void. Excited, she concentrated on it until the shimmer took a form. Several forms, in fact. Forms that she recognized.

"M-Match? Pencil?" she stammered nervously, worried that they were just a hallucination.

The shimmer effect vanished, and it was indeed Match and Pencil who now floated there. With them were Book, Ice Cube, and Needle. "Oh my bubble blower. It really is you guys!" Ecstatic, she propelled herself over there and hugged both of them fiercely. "Oh, you don't

know how happy I am to see you two!"

"Uh, hi, Bubble." Pencil patted her awkwardly. Her eyes darted around. "Where... are we?"

"Oh, this place? I have no idea," Bubble chuckled. "We appear here whenever we die, but we don't remember it when we get recovered. Speaking of which..." She put her hands on her 'hips,' now angry. "It's been a month! Why didn't you recover me?"

"A... month?" Needle asked softly.

Book gasped. "Oh my library. The humans! They were wiping our memories!" The others also gasped, then displayed a mix of emotions on their faces. Anger, fear, confusion... betrayal? Bubble wasn't entirely sure.

"Hold on," Bubble said. "Back up. *Humans?* Like David and Dora?"

"Well yes, but actually no," Pencil responded. She quickly recapped everything that had happened after Ruby accidentally sent Ice Cube into the ufo.

"But, we're not, like, dead," Match said. "At least, I'm pretty sure we're not. So, like, why are we here?"

Bubble was still trying to process the fact that aliens were real. "I don't know," she said slowly. "Maybe-"

Ding! Bubble rolled out of the slot from the Hand Powered Recovery Center. "Huh?"

"Welcome, like, back, Bubble," said a familiar voice. She turned to see Pencil, Match, Book, Ice Cube, Ruby, Needle, and Rocky standing there.

"Hoi, hoi, hoi, thanks for recovering me!" Bubble cheered. "Did you guys find anything interesting in the museum?"

"The museum?" Book frowned. "We never got there. You tripped and

popped on the ground on the way, remember? We had to come back here to recover you. And, uh, I guess Needle and Rocky decided to join us, for some reason." She looked a little confused about that for a second, but the expression quickly slid off her face.

"And I had just, like, come back from the TLC!" Match chimed in. "I found everyone else while they were, like, walking over here."

"What? But we were all in the museum! I had just found this cool control panel-looking thing when Ruby popped me. Right, Ruby?" Bubble looked to Ruby for confirmation.

"Yup!" Ruby took a deep breath. "And then it turned out to be a teleporter thingy, and then I accidentally sent Ice Cube though it, and then Pencil and Book went after her, and then Match and Needle and Rocky followed them, and then I waited a whole week, and when they didn't return, I wandered the city aimlessly until I found them walking to the HPRC a minute ago!" Ruby panted, then took another breath. "You guys have been gone for a month, by the way."

"A month?!" Bubble and Needle exclaimed at the same time. Bubble crossed her arms. "Ruby! Why didn't you recover me??"

"Oh. I, ah, forgot?" Ruby shrugged sheepishly and Bubble would have slapped her forehead if the action wouldn't have popped her.

"Wow, Ruby. You have a crazy imagination! Because NONE of that happened." Pencil threw her hands in the air. "I don't know where you got all that from."

"But it's true!" Ruby protested. "Let's go back to the museum. I'll show you the machine that I used!"

Pencil opened her mouth, but stopped. Match shivered a little. "You know what? I don't, like, really want to explore that museum after all."

"Yeah, me neither," Book agreed.

Needle spoke up. "Well, I think that's a good thing. Exploring that museum isn't safe."

"And why is that?" Pencil interrogated. Needle didn't respond.

Bubble turned to Ice Cube and Rocky. "Do either of *you* remember anything?"

Ice Cube shook her head, but Rocky nodded his. "Really?" Bubble asked excitedly. "What happened?"

Rocky just barfed on the ground. Bubble sighed.

They all sat there in silence for a moment before they heard a faint voice. "...and over here is where the HPRC is glued to the ground..." The voice grew in volume until it was revealed to be Pin's, as she and Teardrop rounded the top of the hill that the FreeSmart Super Van was parked on. She stopped talking when she spotted the motley group of objects. "Needle!" Pin cried. She rushed over to the sewing needle and hugged her fiercely. Teardrop did the same. "Where WERE you? You've been gone for a month!"

Needle didn't know what to say. Ruby had a smug look on her face. "I'll- I'll tell you later," she stuttered. She hugged Teardrop back. "It's good to see you, TD! Did you just get freed from the LOL?" Teardrop nodded.

"Alright, it's clear you three need some alone buddy-buddy time." Pencil *bleahed.* "Come on, Alliance! Let's head back to the Yoyle Needy." Automatically, Pencil raised her hands in defense against the oncoming strike, but it was no use.

Slap. "DON'T call it NEEDY!"

Beep boop, update time! This "episode" is definitely only going to have 2 parts, but the next part will be pretty wholesome and I'm sure I'll have fun writing it :)

IDFB 3b: Feast □

Fries led Golf Ball and Tennis Ball to the Nice Business building, the place where Fries slept and planned to cook the remaining grotatoes. On the far wall, there was a large receptionist's desk with several desktops sitting there. Fries waved to Bomby and Yellow Face, who were sitting at one of the computers, playing some sort of game.

"I'm glad to hear the grotatoes are working out for you, Fries," Tennis Ball said. "Do you feel any side effects?"

"The only thing that's different is that I'm constantly hiccuping." As if to prove his point, Fries hiccuped. "But I'm already used to it. Anyway, there are the computers. Take any one you want, I don't use them anyway."

Golf Ball hurried over to the nearest desktop and turned it on. A loading bar appeared, filling up maddeningly slowly.

Fries had just rounded the corner that led to the elevators, but poked his head out. "When you're done sending whatever signal, could you two help me cook? I've got a lot of food to take care of."

"Nope!" GB replied, without a hint of remorse. "We have important work to do, too!"

"But how will you cook the grotatoes?" TB asked. "Isn't this building's purpose, well, business?"

"Well, this building has a lot of floors, and each floor has it's own 'thing.'" The package of french fries shifted his eyes past the sports globules. "Bomby, Yellow Face, how about you? Could you two help me cook?"

"Sure thing!" Yellow Face replied enthusiastically.

"JUST DON'T MAKE ME USE THE STOVE!" Bomby squealed, not taking his eyes from the computer.

"Uh, yeah. Sure. There's plenty of non stove-related cooking to be done. Head to floor 3 in a few minutes."

"Alright. You guys ready?"

Gelatin, Nickel, and Pie were standing at the entrance to a cave at the base of Yoyle Mountain, a few minute's walk away from the city. Gelatin and Pie were both holding flashlights, while Nickel had a headlight strapped to himself.

"Yeah, I guess," Nickel replied to Gelatin. "But why'd you ask *us* to join you in exploring this cave, again?"

"I just want to try making some new friends! There's nothing wrong with that, is there?"

"Good enough for me," Pie said. With a *click,* she switched her light on and began to walk into the darkness.

"Hey, wait up!" Gelly protested. He turned his own flashlight on and bounded after her. With a bit of difficulty, Nickel managed to activate his headlamp with his foot and followed them in.

Without much natural sunlight, the cave got very dark very quickly within a few minutes. The flashlights really didn't make a huge difference, only shining upon the ground enough for them to see where they were going.

Gelatin waved his free hand in front of his face. "Pee-yoo! This place stinks! I hope something didn't die down here."

"Well, *someone's* been here, at least." Pie pointed to the remains of a campfire. "Why didn't they make this at the entrance, though? The smoke would have just filled the room. Seems pretty short-sighted."

"Well, they certainly would have been short-sighted after lighting a fire, eh?" Gelatin joked. Pie just turned to look at him, unamused.

"You know, cause the smoke would have blinded them-"

"Yeah, yeah, we get it."

"Hey guys, come check this out!" Nickel called out. The desserts joined him by the left wall, where he had found something written on the wall. "There are words and pictures here."

"Cool! Cave drawings!"

Pie studied the drawings and *hmmed.* "These symbols appear to be several centuries old, possibly even older."

Gelatin scanned the wall, reading the first - and only - legible line of text he could see. The rest seemed to be Yoylese, which he couldn't read. "If death fosters birth, then the world will burn..." he muttered to himself quietly. "Huh. I wonder what-"

He spotted a drawing he recognized and froze. "Oh man. Ohhhhh man."

"What is it?" Nickel peered over Gelatin's 'shoulder,' shining more light on the drawing. "No way. Is that Evil Leafy?"

"Who's Evil Leafy?" Pie questioned.

Nickel shook his head. "Nobody knows for certain. But we *do* know that she's some sort of powerful demon, and a pretty bloodthirsty one at that. She died in, what, BFDIA 5c?" He looked to Gelly, who nodded. "Nobody dared recover her, so she's been dead since." He glanced at the wall nervously. "If she's on these paintings... I hope it's not a sign of anything."

Gelatin shone his flashlight at the wall again. "There's more drawings here. It looks like- Yoyle City?!" he shouted in confusion. "Pie, you said these drawings were hundreds of years old."

"Probably thousands."

"Then how did they know about Yoyle City back then...? And- oh, jeez. The HPRC is drawn here too."

"Are you serious?" Nickel bumped Gelatin away to get another look. "Ok, this is just getting creepy."

"I don't get nervous easily." Pie gulped. "But this is starting to really freak me out."

Gelly shone his light down the cave. "Looks like this runs pretty deep. Do you guys want to continue?"

"No!" they shouted in unison.

"Yeah, I kinda wanna go too," Gelatin admitted. "Let's split!"

The three of them rushed out of the cave and were relieved when they hit sunlight again. They slowed their pace to a regular walk and headed back towards Yoyle City, unaware of the pair of eyes watching the trio. Once they disappeared into the city, the owner of the eyes jumped out from the bushes they were hiding behind and dashed into the cave.

"This place is perfect!"

A couple hours after sending a signal to TV in the Locker Of Lockers, informing him and the other trapped objects about the wall teleporter, Golf Ball and Tennis Ball were looking around at a landscape that reminded both of them very much of the old BFDI contesting grounds. Most of it was a flat, grassy plain, partially surrounded by a forest made of unique golden trees. (Not actually trees made of gold, but they looked like it nonetheless.) In the distance was Yoyle Mountain, identifiable by the large spire jutting upwards from the peak, and they could even see the Yoyle Needy poking out on the west side of the mountain. Right in front of them was a small, grey building that appeared to house a pair of bathrooms, with a large, tiled patio in front.

"Not only is this place gorgeous," Golf Ball continued, "but it's quiet, out of the way of that nosy Alliance, and barely an hour's walk away from Yoyle City. I love it!"

"I completely agree. This golden forest is just lovely."

They stood together in silence for a minute, simply admiring the scenery, before TB broke the silence again. "So, you said that you built your factory like a jigsaw puzzle, meaning that it can easily be taken apart and put back together again. Correct?"

"Yup!" GB replied happily. "It's one of the things I'm the most proud of!"

"Well, I don't think either of us considered transportation. We'd never be able to carry the whole thing by ourselves, and even if we can simply reassemble the factory back over here, it'd take countless trips to get all the parts from South Goiky to Yoyleland."

The smile dropped from Golf Ball's face. "Dang it. You're right... how did I miss something so simple??"

"Well, it shouldn't be *too* hard. If we simply build a large enough boat, we can cross the Goiky Canal with all the factory pieces in one or two trips." Tennis Ball thought some more. "Maybe we could borrow FreeSmart's van and attach a flatbed to it to transport the parts across the desert on the other side, as well as through the Evil Forest." They both shuddered at the mention of that forest, having died there one time due to Evil Leafy.

"Well, that sounds like a good plan," GB replied, "but there's one problem: FreeSmart. There's no WAY they'll let us use their vehicle!"

"Well, why don't we just try asking them? It can't hurt, and if they say no, maybe we can do something for them. A favor for a favor."

"That might work... alright. Let's try it. But we should ask them during or after Fries' feast, when they're in a good mood."

"Sounds good. We can build the boat while waiting for the feast to start." The duo turned towards Yoyle Mountain and began the trek home.

The sun was just beginning to touch the horizon as objects filed though the front doors of the Nice Business building, in groups of varying sizes. Gelatin and Woody were the first two to arrive,

entering the elevator that led to the third floor. The doors opened just in time for them to witness Fries coming out of the kitchen, balancing two large stacks of plates in his hands.

"Hey!" Fries shouted when he spotted them. "Can you two help me set the table? I can't set all 22 places by myself, and Bomby and Yellow Face are still finishing up in the kitchen."

"Sure!" Gelly eagerly grabbed one of the stacks from Fries and began slapping them onto the table, which was long and rectangular. The wide sides could each fit 10 people, and the two shorter ends each fit 1 person. Woody nervously took a few plates, lay them down on the table gently, then took a seat at the right end of one of the wide sides. Gelatin followed Fries into the kitchen to get the utensils and glasses.

A few minutes later, as the first of the food started to come out of the kitchen, GB, TB, and Nickel arrived through the elevator doors. Nickel took the seat directly across from Woody, while GB and TB took two seats on the same side of the table as Woody, just on the other end. Not even a second after they had sat down, Rocky leapt out of the elevator and slammed himself down onto a seat next to Nickel with a triumphant squeak.

Another few minutes passed, and the elevator went *ding* once more. But when the doors opened, nobody came out. Gelatin set down the platter of mashed grotatoes he was holding and looked over to find Spongy squished inside. "Uh... a little help?" Spongy pleaded. Gelly sighed and went over to pull the sponge out.

Another 10 minutes passed, and nearly all the food was ready and on the table now. Coiny, Pen, Needle, Teardrop, and Pin had all come in together a few minutes ago and were sitting down together, chatting about various subjects, when the entirety of FreeSmart came out of the elevator. Five of them immediately sat down opposite Coiny and his friends, but Bubble stopped by Tennis Ball for a moment. "Psst. TB," she whispered. "I need a favor. Can we talk after the feast?"

Tennis Ball realized that this was the opportunity he and Golf Ball needed. "Sure thing," he whispered back. "Golf Ball and I will wait right outside the lobby."

"Thank you!"

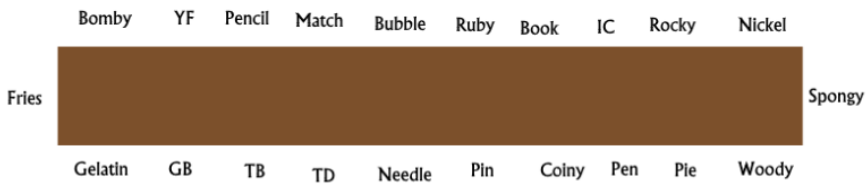
"Bubble! Are you coming or not?" Pencil yelled at her.

"Coming!" Bubble called back. She hurried over and plopped down into a seat between Match and Ruby.

Pie was the last person to arrive. "Sorry I'm late," she apologized as she exited the elevator.

"No no, you're right on time." Fries was carrying the last dish out from the kitchen. He hiccupped, set down the dish, and took the chair between Bomby and Gelatin, as the head of the table.

(A/N: if you want, here's a horribly made representation of where everyone is sitting at the table)



Fries called out for everyone to stop talking, and they did. "I'm glad you - *hic!* - all came." He decided not to mention Firey. "I invited you all here today partially because I'm feeling a lot better now that I have my fries back, and I felt generous when I saw how many potatoes were left over. But - *hic!* - this feast is also partially to celebrate that we've finally found a way to free our friends from the Locker Of Losers." He spread his arms out wide. "As you can see, I've prepared a lot of - *hic!* - different dishes for you all. There's five different types of grotatoes, as well as various other food I found in the kitchen, like blueberries, baguettes, and more." He sat down and hiccuped again. "Now dig in, and enjoy yourselves!"

Simultaneously, 22 people picked up their forks, knives, and/or spoons and began to eat with relish, as they quickly discovered that the food was delicious. Fries, Bomby, and Yellow Face had been excellent cooks.

As Fries popped a strawberry into his mouth, he looked around the table. It wasn't perfect; Gelatin, Nickel, and Pie looked a little nervous about something, Bubble kept stealing weird glances at Match and Pencil, and Needle looked totally out of it, eating much more slowly than anyone else with a confused look on her face.

But it wasn't all bad, either. Teardrop looked genuinely happy to be back with her friends. Pin, Pen, and Coiny were all laughing at a joke Spongy just told. Woody seemed to be slowly getting braver and braver in the past few months. And, as he had said earlier, there was now a way to free everyone from the LOL. (Not to mention that everyone was liking his food.)

Fries smiled, feeling happier than he had during most of his life. Maybe things would be ok.

"Man," Tennis Ball groaned, his stomach full. "That was a GREAT meal."

"Agreed. I'm stuffed." Golf Ball was leaning next to TB, against the front wall of Fries' building. Most of the other objects had gone home now, as it was dark out, but a few were still inside. "Why are we waiting here, again?"

"You'll see." Suddenly, the doors opened and FreeSmart exited the building in one large group. Ruby was chatting with Match and Ice Cube, but the other three were silent.

Bubble spotted TB and GB. "Uh, guys?" she said. "You all go on ahead. I, uh, forgot something in the building."

"See you back at the Yoyle Needy!" Pencil replied over her 'shoulder,' not even bothering to turn around.

Bubble waited until they had walked out of sight before shuffling up to the sports balls. "So," she started, "last month, Pencil and the others went into the Science Museum. I was popped partway through, but according to Ruby, they went through some sort of teleporter thing with Needle and Rocky and didn't come back. They only returned

today, but they say they never made it to the museum. They didn't even believe Ruby when she said a month had passed. It's like their memories were wiped or something..." She stopped, seeming to realize that she was rambling. "Anyway, I know you guys are really smart, so I was wondering if you could look into it? Maybe you have some sort of mind-reading machine?"

"Against my better judgement, I'm inclined to help you," Golf Ball replied after Spongy came through the door and passed by them. "But only on two conditions!" Bubble nodded. "First, as I announced earlier today, Tennis Ball and I are leaving for the old competing grounds tomorrow for scientific research. That means that we won't be able to help you for several months, and you'll need to wait." Bubble visibly saddened a little. "The second condition," GB continued, "is that you let us borrow the FreeSmart van. We will need it once we cross the Goiky canal."

"Oh, but Pencil would kill me if she knew I lent that to you guys! Literally!"

"Then don't tell her," Tennis Ball interrupted. "If we just take the van tonight, when you guys are asleep, then she'll have no reason to suspect you. Does it need keys?"

"No," Bubble sighed. "Anybody can just turn it on and drive it."

"Excellent! Then it's a deal?" Golf Ball stuck her foot out.

Bubble hesitated, but only for a moment. She really wanted to know what was wrong with her friends. Desperately hoping that Pencil would forgive her if she ever found out, Bubble lifted her hand and shook GB's foot in agreement. "Deal."

And with the three of them occupied by the handshake (of sorts), none of them noticed Spongy, who was a couple blocks away from them, turn purple and dissolve into thin air.

And that's the end to this "episode!" Any thoughts on what those cave drawings and mysterious, undecipherable words could mean? Things are heating up a little hehe

See you in IDFB 4 :)

IDFB 4a: Uncaged

December 1st

It was dawn. The rising sun peeked over the horizon, shining its rays across the unusual purple grass and collection of buildings that was Yoyle City. One of the first beams of golden light landed on a manhole cover as it was lifted up and onto the pavement. A football-shaped hunk of metal emerged from the sewers. Leafy - for it was her, of course - looked around to get her bearings, and heard a faint scream. She looked up to find a thin and pointy building towering over the rest of the city, the base next to her. Directly above was something dangling from the top; the source of the screaming. Sighing, Leafy entered the building and began to climb the long, spiral staircase.

After several minutes and many, many steps, Leafy reached the top. She dashed to the edge and looked down, seeing a chain tied to the railing. She quickly took the chain in both hands and pulled as hard as she could, grunting with exertion. "Oh, Firey," she said to herself as she hauled the chain upwards. "Why'd you have to go and get yourself trapped in a cage? You *know* you're afraid of heights." She got no response, and she didn't count the constant screaming as one.

With one final heave, she pulled the last of the chain up, revealing that the object attached to the end was a cage. And inside the cage was, of course, Firey. Leafy balanced the cage on the railing precariously and, holding it with one hand, used her other to pull out a knife. She grunted again and tossed it off the edge as she conjured a new one, this time with a serrated edge. She began to saw at the part of the chain that was attached to the cage. All the while, Firey screamed like mad.

"Listen," Leafy muttered as she moved the knife back and forth, slowly but surely making progress. "I don't know what's going on

with your memory, but we have to get out of the city. It's not safe."

More screaming.

She continued. "I found something in a cave, and I don't like it. This city is in serious danger, and... oh, I already said that." She paused to sigh again and wipe sweat from her brow.

More screaming.

Leafy kept sawing away. "I know you're afraid of heights, but could you *please* stop screaming? I'm trying to get you out of here, and you're not making it any easier."

More screaming. Leafy just gritted her teeth and, with a final push, snapped the chain in half, disconnecting it from the cage. "Gotcha!"

"Leafy?!"

Leafy whirled around to see who had managed to sneak up on her, but in her haste, accidentally shifted the weight of the cage. Gravity took control and pulled the cage off the balcony, yanking Leafy with it. She only had time to glimpse Bubble's face before hurtling off the edge and towards the ground below.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

Coiny loved Yoyle City. Even after waking up at dawn and taking an early morning walk around the city every morning for the past 3 years and some odd months, he still adored the place. It just never got old for him. Not even the extra chill of winter, which didn't affect Yoyle City much other than a decrease in temperature, couldn't dampen his mood as he strolled among the buildings.

Coiny was on one of these walks when he bumped into Fries, quite literally. They both turned the same corner at the same time and knocked each other over. Coiny groaned and got up, then grabbed one of Fries' arms and hoisted him to his feet. "You ok, Fries?"

Fries opened his eyes blearily and looked around. "...what am I doing

outside?"

"What do you mean, 'what are you doing outside'?" Coiny had a thought. "Were you sleepwalking?"

Fries rubbed his eyes, clearly exhausted. "Yeah. It's been happening more and more, and I've been losing sleep."

The copper coin noticed now that Fries had bags under his eyes. "Ah, geez. Well, I'll walk ya back to your building. I'm heading in that direction, anyways."

"Thanks." Fries wobbled a little as he walked. *He really looks worse for the wear,* Coiny thought. They matched each other's step in silence for a few moments before passing Fries' farm. Coiny paused to take a look and saw some unfamiliar sprouts pushing through the dirt. He pointed. "Those don't look like grotato plants."

Fries yawned, then hiccupped. "They're not. I'm trying to grow some other plants now. Those are just flowers."

Coiny shuddered as he thought of the infamous Flower. A snore emitted from somewhere in the farm, and the duo peered closer to find the source. Coiny smiled as he remembered: Woody. "Man, Woody's been so much happier since you let him sleep in the farm. That was a really decent thing of you to do."

Another snore. Coiny turned to see Fries had fallen asleep, leaning against the fence. He chuckled.

CRASH!! A cacophony of noises assaulted Coiny - metal groaning and crumpling, wood splintering, and dirt splatting everywhere. Not to mention the ear-piercing shrieks. Fries jumped. "Ah! I'm awake!"

Coiny spun back around. "What the heck was that?!" The farm was a mess. A large, metal cage had slammed into the dirt, which was now everywhere. Most of the flower and grotato sprouts had been ruined. Coiny could see poor Woody's legs sticking out from under the cage.

Then a figure stepped out from the cage, wobbling uncertainly. "Firey!" Coiny shouted happily. "You're finally free!"

A *whump* sounded right next to him, and he felt a rush of wind hit his face. Coiny turned yet again to see Fries running in circles. "Get it out! Get it out! Get it out!" Fries then proceeded to fall on his face, spilling most of his fries onto the pavement, as well as a mysterious metal object. Coiny almost didn't recognize her at first, but then he realized. "Leafy?!"

Leafy ignored him and got to her feet. She spotted Firey. "Come on! Let's get out of here!" She grabbed his hand and he followed instinctively, stumbling over the broken garden. They rushed away. "Wait!" Coiny ran after them.

Leafy made it two blocks before Firey protested. "Let go of me!"

"No! We have to-"

"Let GO!" Firey yanked his hand out of Leafy's. "I don't trust you!"

Leafy stopped. "But, it's me! Leafy! You HAVE to remember!"

Firey rubbed his hand. "I... don't know who you are. At all." He ran.

"Firey!" Leafy rushed after him, but he was much faster. After another three blocks, she gave up. "Firey..."

Coiny caught up. "Leafy! I thought you were dead!"

Faster than he could have thought, Leafy spun around, brandishing a knife. Coiny raised his arms. "Woah, hey! I know the others shunned you and everything, but I don't have any hard feelings for what you did in the finale anymore."

Slowly, Leafy lowered her knife. "Really?"

"Yeah." Coiny lowered his arms as well. "I had a lot of time to think about it, and I decided it's not really worth getting mad over now. Especially now that BFDIA was cancelled, so nobody won that anyway."

Leafy had a mix of emotions on her face. Sadness, guilt, a touch of anger. Coiny decided to say something. "So, are you, uhh... planning to stay in Yoyle City?"

Her face became guarded. "No."

"Why not?"

Leafy looked thoughtful and was quiet for several moments. Finally, she said: "Get out of the city."

"What?"

"You heard me. It's not safe anymore. Tell Pin the same, and Firey, too. If you can talk any sense into him." Then she turned and ran, leaving Coiny even more confused than he was before.

Bubble yawned as she left her room in the Yoyle Needy and climbed up the few stairs that led to the top balcony. She had always enjoyed the sunrise, and being in Yoyle City hadn't changed a thing.

She opened the door and gasped, not expecting to see Leafy perched on the railing with Firey's cage, sawing at something with a knife. *"Leafy?!"* she called out.

Leafy turned towards her, only to fall backwards off the railing, taking the cage with her. "Leafy!" Bubble rushed to the edge and peered down, unable to do anything as she watched Leafy and Firey tumble through the air and land on the farm far, far below. She continued to watch as Leafy and Firey ran off, with Coiny following, before losing them in a clump of buildings.

"Bubble! Why are you awake and shouting at the air so early in the morning?" Bubble turned around to find a sleepy-looking Pencil storming towards her. "You've ruined my beauty sleep!" Pencil extended her pointer finger.

"But-"

Bubble opened her eyes to find an all too-familiar "landscape" around her - the inky void that objects went to when they died. She sighed in anger as she realized Pencil had popped her. At least, the thing that

looked like Pencil.

Bubble only had to glance around for a second before finding the other five objects trapped here - Pencil, Match, Book, Ice Cube, and Needle. Because Bubble popped so often, she had been here many more times since the previous month. Together, they determined that the other five objects here were the real ones, and the objects outside were probably fake clones, as they couldn't be dead *and* alive at the same time.

Ice Cube spotted her first. "Bubble's back!" she cried, and the others looked around to find her.

"Welcome, like, back, Bubble," Match said. Needle gave a small wave, and Bubble waved back.

"Any improvements?" Book inquired.

"No," Bubble responded sadly. "I'm still not remembering anything when I get recovered." The others gave a collective groan.

Pencil spoke. "Maybe you're just not good enough."

This angered Bubble, but she decided not to respond. "In other news, I saw Leafy today. She was in the Yoyle Needy, and she freed Firey from his cage! I think."

The others gasped. "Leafy? Are you sure it was her?" Needle asked.

"Positive."

"That little green brat!" Pencil clenched her fists. "Thinking she can just free Firey after he burned the Eiffel Tower down, and almost did the same to the FreeSmart Supervan!"

"Speaking of which," Match interrupted, "did you ever, like, find out who took it?"

Bubble felt a little nervous, but she hoped it didn't show. "No," she lied. She hadn't told them that Golf Ball and Tennis Ball needed it, and she didn't plan to.

"Wait." Book looked she had an epiphany. "I just realized something. Why haven't you and Ruby tried exploring the museum again and finding that telepod thingy?"

Bubble gritted her teeth. "Two reasons. One, I've thought of it several times in this weird world, but you know I haven't been able to remember anything from it yet. I don't know why I haven't thought of it normally in the real world, though. And two, Pencil's fake doesn't want anyone going back to that museum."

"Well, just keep trying to remember, ok?" Needle said. She gave an encouraging smile. "I know you can do it."

"Thanks, Needle." Bubble pressed her hands to her temples and thought over and over: *go to the museum, go to the museum, go to the museum, go to the museum, go to the museum...*

"I'm BORED."

"Clock, I swear, if you say that one more time..."

The 36 objects trapped in the Tiny Loser Chamber were restless. Sure, they had always been restless, but after learning that they were eventually going to be freed, they had gotten even more so.

"I wish there was a way to tell the time!" Clock kept complaining. Robot Flower snorted, but if Clock didn't see the irony, then Robot Flower wasn't going to point it out. "We have no idea if somebody's going to be released today or not!"

"Well, of course we do. TV, care to display the date and time?" Lollipop asked snarkily. TV obliged, showing that it was 11:59 AM on December 1st, 2016. "See, Clock? Only a fool wouldn't know how to solve a simple problem like that."

"Hey." Lightning floated over to Lollipop. "Are you insulting my friend Clock?"

"Maybe I am. What's it to you?"

Lighting flew right into her face. "Listen here, Lolly. If you think-"

Lightning vanished.

Lollipop crossed her arms, unamused. "I'm listening."

IDFB 4b: Searching For Clues 🔎

Naily blinked. When she closed her eyes, she was still trapped in the dark Locker Of Losers, but when she opened them, sunlight nearly blinded her. "Oww!" she complained. "What the hammer, Lightning? Turn your brightness down! Nobody likes your 'light mode!'"

"That's not me, Naily. That's the sun! We're free!"

"Really??" Naily opened her eyes again, more careful this time, and saw that they were indeed outside, in an unfamiliar environment. She leapt to her feet in joy. "Yes! We nailed it!"

"Ohmygosh! NAILY!" The nail turned just in time to be smothered in a hug from Bomby.

"Bomby! It's so good to see you!" she cried happily. The two had become close friends when originally trapped in the LOL before Bomby joined BFDIA. She had seriously missed him. Apparently, the feeling was mutual.

"Welcome back, guys." Bomby dropped Naily and she peered around him to see who had spoken. Pie was standing there, along with Coiny, Pen, and all of FreeSmart (minus Bubble). Pie stepped forward and spoke again. "If you want, Bomby and I can show you guys around the city." Naily only noticed the cluster of buildings after Pie mentioned them.

"No thanks!" Lightning replied. "That box made me feel claustrophobic. I need to get as far away from anything solid as I can!" And with that, he shot into the sky.

"Well, there goes my idea," Pencil muttered to herself.

Lightning felt amazing, majestically soaring through the air with his arms outstretched in front of him. Bursting through clouds and feeling the water droplets sizzle on his "skin" as they conducted electricity... it was amazing. MUCH better than that stupid box.

He didn't stop rising until he was several hundred feet above the ground. He stretched and flexed his new arms, which felt strange. Turns out Puffball still had Pin's old limbs, so she had given the arms to him.

Lightning floated gently and looked down, taking in the entirety of Yoyleland and Yoyle City, before speeding away once again. He had always wanted to visit South Goiky, the original contesting grounds of BFDI, but never had the chance. Now he could.

Ding! The HPRC whirred as it spat out Bubble, who popped up from a flat image to her usual round shape.

"Right, Bubble," Pencil scolded. "Don't wake me up so early like that again or I won't recover you for a whole day, instead of just half a day!"

"But I saw Leafy!" Bubble protested angrily. "She freed Firey from his cage!"

Match gasped. "How dare she! Also, what did Firey, like, do?"

"Does it really matter?" Coiny emerged from behind Ice Cube and typed Woody's name into the HPRC.

Pencil put her hands on her 'hips.' "IT DOES matter, no-thank-you-very-much."

"Whatever." Coiny cranked the recovery center's handle until Woody popped out, then put a hand on his back and led him away.

Book began to explain. "Near the beginning of this year, Firey accidentally burned down the Eiffel tower, including the Clubhouse of Awesomeness. Then he almost did the same to the FreeSmart SuperVan, so Pencil locked him in that cage that hung from the top

of the Yoyle Needy." She paused. "I *did* see that cage in the middle of Fries' garden when we left for the LOL today, but I didn't really think about it."

"You SAW the cage and didn't think to TELL me about it?" Pencil yelled at Book.

"Hey, calm down! I thought you had seen it. I'm surprised you didn't!"

"Well, what do we do now?" Ruby asked.

Pencil put her hand to her 'chin' and thought about it. "First of all, we'll need to cage Firey again. Second-"

"Are you sure?" Book interrupted. "Firey was in there for almost a year. Surely he's learned his lesson by now?"

"Good point. But Leafy hasn't. So let's focus on capturing *her* first, then we can talk about Firey. Satisfied?"

Book shrugged.

"Right then. Let's head back to the Yoyle Needy and think of a plan!"

Pencil began to lead the way back to their base, but Bubble spoke up. "I'll meet you guys back there in a bit. I have an idea about, err, capturing Leafy, but I need to go find something for that. Ruby, I'll need you - can you come with me?"

"Huh? Oh, sure!" Ruby split away from the others and followed Bubble instead.

"Don't be long, girls!" Pencil called from over her 'shoulder.'

"Alright, let's get you back to the farm," Coiny muttered to Woody. He had heard everything that FreeSmart had said, and knew of their goal - which means he had to find Leafy before they did and warn her. But first, he had to make sure Woody was ok.

It was only a couple minute's walk from the HPRC back to Fries' farm.

But the moment Woody saw the ruined cage, he started screaming and wrenched out of Coiny's grasp.

"Woody no, wait-!" Coiny sighed as Woody ran off, still screaming. He should have known that Woody would be scared of the farm now, after being crushed in it. "Poor guy."

The copper coin heard Pencil and the others returning to the Yoyle Needy, so he decided to split. There were a few people he wanted to talk to. Thankfully, it didn't take long to find Pin. Only 10 minutes after leaving the farm, he saw her, Needle, and Teardrop playing hopscotch.

"...4, 3, 1! Done!" Needle scooped up a rock from the '2' square and passed it to Teardrop. "Your turn!" Teardrop put the rock back on the '2' square and began to hop along the other numbers.

Coiny sidled up next to Pin. "Yo Pin."

"Hi, Coiny! What's up?"

"Do you know where Firey is?"

Pin frowned. "Didn't FreeSmart trap him in a cage?"

"Yeah, but he got freed today."

"Oh. Sorry, I haven't seen him."

"I have!" Needle piped up as TD finished her hopping. Pin began her own hopping. "I saw him running through the city earlier. He was going towards Yoyle Mountain."

"That's a big help. Thanks, Needy!"

Needle tried to slap Coiny, but he had plenty of practice dodging Firey's slaps, so she missed. "DON'T call me NEEDY!"

"Yeesh. Before I go, though, I've got something else to say." Pin finished her hopping and looked at Coiny curiously, as did TD and Needle. "I saw Leafy earlier, and she said something about the city not being safe. I don't know if she's crazy, or something, but I figured

I'd let you guys know. Just in case anything goes south and we need to leave."

"Oh please," Pin scoffed. "That poor leaf's been living on her own for so long now, she'd probably do anything to get some attention. I wouldn't listen to her, Coiny."

"Huh." Coiny looked at Needle. "What about you?"

"I don't really know how to feel about Leafy."

"That's fair." Coiny glanced pointedly at Teardrop, who crossed her arms and pouted. "Well, I guess that answers that question. Anyway, I'm gonna go find Firey. See ya guys later!" Coiny grinned and did a mock salute to them, then dashed away.

The Yoyle City Science Museum. A dark, abandoned, mysterious place. Until recently, sunlight had not shone on any part of the museum's interior for many years. Today, the sunlight shone on the floor once again as the front door creaked open, revealing a cautious Bubble and a less-than-cautious Ruby.

"The teleporter thing was on the second floor, right?" Bubble whispered to Ruby.

"Yeah," Ruby whispered back. "But why are we whispering?"

"I don't know. This place just feels haunted or something." Bubble cleared her throat and stopped whispering. "But, uh, I guess that probably sounds silly."

At the very edge of Bubble's vision, a flash of red appeared and disappeared instantly. Although the sphere of soap couldn't make out what the flash was before it vanished, it felt familiar to her. Like she had seen it somewhere before. A memory that was trying to escape...

"Not at all! I've encountered plenty of ghosts in my lifetime," Ruby replied enthusiastically.

Bubble snapped out of her reverie. "Huh?"

"Come on! Let's goooooo!" Ruby somehow managed to cartwheel up the stairs. Bubble gaped at this feat with astonishment, then followed her.

The second floor hadn't changed at all since FreeSmart last visited the museum. Even the glowing blue portal that Pencil had accidentally shot onto the ceiling was still there, swirling away. Bubble ignored it and looked around, quickly spotting the pedestal and archway that she had first laid eyes on two months ago. "Here it is!"

She walked over and placed her hand on the side of the arch closest to the set of buttons attached. "So... you used this control panel to teleport the others to... wherever?"

"Yup!"

"But it's in Yoylese. How did you know which buttons to press? Can you read Yoylese?"

"No," Ruby admitted. "I just pressed a bunch of random buttons."

Bubble groaned. "I guess we'll have to learn a new language, then."

"Ooh! Ooh ooh ooh! I just remembered something!" Ruby exclaimed. "Last time we were here, Book said that she's a Yoylese-to-English translation guide!"

Bubble vaguely remembered Book saying something like that a while back. "We should talk to Book, then." She mimed putting her hand to her metaphorical chin, but didn't actually do it, as she would have popped. "Let's copy down the symbols on the control panel and show them to her. I don't want to risk Pencil finding all three of us at the museum."

Half an hour of walking brought Coiny to the almost-northern edge of Yoyle City. Ahead of him, more easily visible now due to a decrease in buildings, loomed Yoyle Mountain. But that's not where the copper coin was going. Three years ago, when the cast of BFDIA realized that the city was their new home, many of them had decided to explore and see what they could find, although in the end, nearly everyone

eventually decided to stay in the center of the city. Coiny and Firey had come here alone and found a cool bunker-like basement underneath one of the buildings.

Coiny stood in the entrance to that basement now. he stepped inside and knocked on the wall. "Firey?" he called out.

He heard a *bonk* and a muffled complaint from inside. Then: "Coiny?"

Coiny went inside fully to find Firey sitting on one of the old cots. "Hey, Firey!"

"Hey, Coiny." Firey didn't sound very happy to see him.

"You ok?" Coiny walked up and sat down next to him on the cot.

Firey sighed. "Yeah, I'm fine. I'm just..." He shuddered. "...recovering from being so high up for so long."

"Yeah, you're afraid of heights, right?" Firey nodded. "Well, don't worry. I'm sure you'll be back to your old self in no time!"

The flame smiled weakly. "Thanks."

"Although..." Coiny coughed into his hand. "I only came partially to see if you were alright. I also wanted to warn you that Pencil and the others might try to, ah, cage you again. So it might be best if you stayed here for the time being."

Firey's smile melted. "I guess..."

"Hey, don't look down!" Coiny jumped up. "I'll come visit you, maybe I'll bring some of Fries' grotatoes. Those things are DELICIOUS!" He shouted that last part. "But first, I'm gonna have to find Leafy and warn her about FreeSmart too, because they'll be actively looking for her right now."

Firey gave Coiny a blank look. "Who?"

Coiny just stared back. "I'll... ask you about that later. Anyway, I should go now. See you!"

"Bye." Firey waved weakly. Coiny exited the bunker basement and began to walk back to the center of the city.

Hey! I'm really sorry that this chapter took forever. It started out with a couple of things that prevented me from writing it at first, and then I lost a ton of motivation.

But I'm back! And no matter what may happen to my motivation in the future, I promise I WILL eventually complete this story. I've got a lot planned, and I very much want to finish it. There are several parts I'm looking forward to writing!

See you in IDFB 5 :)

IDFB 5a: Rock, Bungee, Scissors!

January 1st, 2017

Deep, blissful, dreamless sleep. The sort of sleep Fries had been hoping to have for weeks now. The sort of sleep he had somehow managed to acquire in the last couple days. The sort of sleep that he had been lacking, causing him to become quite irritable.

Naturally, it had to be interrupted by Gelatin blasting an airhorn in Fries' face.

Fries shot up in his bed. "Ahh! What! Who! Where!"

"HAPPY NEW YEAR, FRIES!!" Gelatin cried, blasting the airhorn again.

"GELATIN! What in the WORLD?!" Fries rubbed his eyes vigorously. Gelatin was standing in front of him with Rocky sitting on his head. Both were wearing party hats. Rocky had a party blower in his mouth and promptly blew it.

"What time is it?" Fries asked wearily.

"12:07 AM, my dude!" Gelatin replied enthusiastically. "Pencil just hosted one of the BEST New Year's party's I've ever been to. I'm surprised you didn't hear us!"

Fries groaned. "I can't deal with this," the sleep-deprived, deep-fried package of potatoes muttered. He lay back down in his bed and stuffed his face into the pillow. "Remind me to lock my door when I go to bed in the future," he requested, his voice muffled from the pillow.

"Naw, why would I do that? If you locked the door, I couldn't come in and annoy you!"

Gelly got a mouthful of pillow as Fries had thrown it at him, causing him to fall over and Rocky to fall off. "That's the POINT!" Fries said angrily.

"Woah there, Superspud! You've got a strong arm!" Gelatin tossed the pillow back to him. "Well, if you ever feel like not being a party pooper, feel free to come down and join the fun!" The glob of jello cartwheeled out the door as Fries stared at the pillow in his hand. He didn't throw the pillow *that* hard... did he?

(cue IDFB intro lol)

Bubble opened her eyes just to realize that she had popped again, this time simply by tripping and falling. The black void peppered with faraway twinkles of multicolored lights surrounded her. She sighed and turned towards the others who were, of course, still in the strange dimension.

The last few times she had been there, they discovered that while you were dead, you could make certain objects appear. Small things, like cups of coffee, or sticks and stones, or a chess board and chess pieces. Pencil and Match were dueling it out in chess right now, with Book and Ice Cube watching them closely.

Needle was only observing from a distance, so she was the first one to notice Bubble's arrival. They waved at each other. "How's it going, Bubble?" she called out.

"It's not too bad." Bubble floated over to Needle. "I was just heading back to the Yoyle Needy- er, the Yoyle Needle after the rejoin. Roboty and Pillow were freed, by the way."

"Oh." Needle scratched her head. "Has another month already really passed? It's hard to keep track of time here."

"Yeah. Actually, it's New Year's Day today!" A party hat appeared on top of Bubble's head. "So we're in 2017 now."

"Cool!"

"Checkmate!" Needle and Bubble looked over to see Match cheering and doing a dance. "I win!

"Dangit. How'd you do that?" Pencil grumbled. She studied the board to see if Match had made a mistake, but without success.

"I'm just, like smarter than you, Pence-Pence." Match stopped dancing abruptly as she spotted Bubble. "Oh, hey! It looks like Bubble's ~~*WORTHLESS.*~~"

"Huh??" Bubble cried. That last word that came out of Match's mouth sounded twisted, distorted.

"I *said,* it looks like you've, like, returned!" Match continued. She gave no indicator that she was aware of what she had just said. Neither did anyone else.

Bubble must have looked worried, because Match noticed this and dropped her smile. "Bubble? What's, like, wrong?" she asked.

"N-nothing," Bubble replied. Internally, she tried to dismiss Match's 'slip of the tongue' as just a passing bit of stress. But she couldn't get it out of her mind. And was it just her, or did the lights look slightly different?

"Well, Bubble? Come on!" Pencil shook Bubble, breaking her train of thought. "I want to know what's going on in the outside world!"

"Oh yeah. Fake you just held the most impressive New Year's party I've ever seen!" Bubble exclaimed. She continued to update the others on what had happened since the last time she had popped - only a week ago. Not one of the objects was aware of an invisible presence watching them all.

"Ahh, now THIS is nice!" Ruby sighed contently.

She, Gelatin, Needle, Teardrop, and the newly-released Pillow were lying on deck chairs, on the roof of some random building, soaking

up the warmth of the sun. The others (excluding Teardrop) sighed as well, very satisfied with the spot they had found. Few buildings in Yoyle City had roof access.

"Sooo, Pillowwww..." Gelatin drawled lazily, stretching the last syllable of the word 'pillow', "how does it feel to not be in the TLC anymore?"

Pillow sat up. "Oh, it's lovely! The sun on my face, the wind on my pillow cover..." She sighed again and lay back down in the chair. "That place was claustrophobic, but I'm extremely glad to be out. Now I can explore all of my scientific hypotheses!"

"If you want to be a scientist, why are you sitting here with us?" Needle asked.

"I just needed to soak up some sun. Extrude the darkness of that box from myself."

The trapdoor to the roof burst open, slamming against the ground. Everyone quickly sat up to see Fries emerge from the floor below, struggling to get out from a mess of multicolored rope. He shook his foot out from the last entangled section and turned towards the crowd, scowling.

"Hey, Fries!" Gelatin waved at him. "Glad you wanted to join us."

"I don't want to join you, Fries grumbled. "I've been looking for you because I just wanted to return *this,* which you very irresponsibly left in my room for me to trip on this morning." Fries reached past the trapdoor, grabbed something, and hurled the item towards Gelatin, which was revealed to be Rocky. At the same time, Rocky barfed midair.

Gelatin managed to avoid Rocky. He did not manage to avoid the projectile vomit. Rocky's barf splattered against Gelatin's face as Rocky himself smashed into the foot-high wall of concrete that served as a guardrail for the edge of the roof, cracking it.

Gelatin wiped the vomit from his face. "Gross! I hate being soggy."

"Don't ever come into my building ever again," Fries warned. He

began to step down the ladder in the trapdoor hole but tripped again. "And next time someone comes up here, move these dang bungee cords!" he called from below.

Gelatin got up. Walking over to the trapdoor, he picked up one of the ropes and pulled on it. It stretched.

"Bungee cords," he slowly repeated. Gelatin turned to the others and grinned. "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"Doo-da-doot-do, doo-doo-doo..." Coiny was humming to himself as he walked down the streets of Yoyle City. Turning a corner, he had his eyes closed and therefore bumped into Nickel, who was turning the same corner from the other side. "Ow!" they both exclaimed. Coiny rubbed his forehead and mumbled, "Not again..."

Then he noticed the air shimmering dangerously. Looking up, both coins realized who they had run into and backpedaled away from each other as quickly as they could. The two didn't stop until the otherworldly voices faded away.

Coiny breathed a sigh of relief. "Close one."

"Yeah," Nickel agreed. They got up and stood there awkwardly for a minute. "Uhhh..." Nickel finally said. "It's been a while. How have you been?"

"I'm doing pretty good. You?" Coiny edged around Nickel, trying to find the minimal safe distance. They began to walk in the same direction.

"Same here. I'm kinda bored, though," Nickel responded. "As cool as this city is, it's sort of lost its spark for me, seeing as how we've been here for three and a half years now."

Coiny opened his mouth to disagree, but Nickel spoke again, interrupting him. "Hey... do you hear someone yelling?"

The copper coin listened. There *was* a faint screaming sound from somewhere... and it was getting closer. Coiny looked up and leapt

back. "Ah!"

"What is it?" Nickel looked up too, just in time to witness Gelatin come to a full stop directly above Nickel, before shooting back up into the sky. "WOOOOOOOHOOOOOOOOO!!!!!" Gelatin yelled at the top of his lungs.

"YIPEEEEE!!!" Pillow appeared and the same thing happened. This time, Coiny was able to see that she was attached to a bungee cord. The coins looked farther up to see Gelatin, Pillow, Teardrop, Ruby, and Rocky all bouncing through the air, with bungee cords tied around each of their waists. Rocky was upside down.

"What the heck are you guys doing?" Coiny called up to them.

"What does it look..." Ruby's voice faded away as she skyrocketed back into the air.

"What was that?" Coiny called again. "I missed the end of that sentence!"

Ruby started speaking again, but she wasn't audible until she got closer to the ground. "...bungee jumping, silly!"

"But *why?"*

"It's fuuuuuun!!!"

Ruby shot upwards once more as Gelatin stretched towards the ground. "Nickel, come join us!"

He grabbed the top of Nickel. The coin tried to squirm away, but it was too late. "Nonononono- AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!"

Coiny quickly stepped out of reach of the other's arms. He shielded his eyes from the sun to look at the top of the building. They were barely visible, but Coiny could just see Gelatin toss Nickel onto the roof before coming back down.

At the same time, Rocky was beginning to falling as well. But something looked off about his descent. With a shock, Coiny realized that his bungee cord had somehow been severed. Rocky was free-

falling towards the ground with nothing to stop him.

"Look out!" Coiny cried unnecessarily. He ducked behind a mailbox and waited for the inevitable.

Sure enough, Rocky hit the pavement with a sickening *CRASH!* More noises followed - the sound of rock on metal and splashing water. Confused, Coiny peeked out from behind the mailbox. Rocky had made a medium-sized hole in the sidewalk, but it looked like it went deeper than a small crater.

Pillow stretched downwards, grabbing the mailbox to keep from shooting back into the sky. "What happened?"

"I don't know," Coiny answered. "He just fell. I guess his cord broke? Uh, here, lemme untie you."

Coiny quickly loosened the bungee cord from around Pillow's midsection, then did the same for the others as they followed Pillow's movements. Just as they were all on the ground, the front door to the building burst open. Needle came running through, panting heavily.

"I... I saw... someone reached through a window in the floor below the roof..." She paused for a second to catch her breath. "Someone reached through the window with a pair of scissors and just cut Rocky's cord!"

"What the lunchroom? Who would do that??" Gelatin exclaimed. Teardrop shrugged.

"I don't know. I hurried down the stairs as fast as I could, but there was nobody on the top floor," Needle confessed.

Nickel exited the building and joined them. The seven of them crowded around the hole in the pavement. It went straight through the concrete and down into some circular tunnel that had pipes running along the wall and a thin layer of water at the bottom.

"Sewers?" Ruby guessed.

"Looks like it," Pillow agreed. "I didn't know this place even had sewers."

"Yeah, I haven't seen many manhole covers around..." Nickel pondered.

Gelatin jumped down, making sure not to get wet from the water. He picked up Rocky, who was calmly sitting in the stream. "You ok, buddy?"

Rocky vomited in Gelatin's face. "Not again!" the blob of jello whined. "Looks like he's fine, at least."

Ruby and Coiny jumped down to join them, but Needle, Nickel, Pillow, and Teardrop stayed on the surface. Ruby picked up something shiny. "What's this?"

"Lemme see." Gelatin dropped Rocky and snatched up the object, inspecting it closely. "Yup," he finally said. "This is most definitely one of the knives Leafy carries around."

"Leafy?!" Ruby and Nickel exclaimed at the same time.

Pillow looked confused. "What? What's so important about Leafy?"

Ruby began to explain how Leafy stole Dream Island at the end of BFDI. The mention of Leafy made Coiny recall a conversation he had two weeks ago with a certain someone...

Looks like Leafy's brief presence in the city a month ago is being noticed by more people... I wonder what the outcome of that will be? *chuckles knowingly*

IDFB 5b: Breadcrumb Trails

December 16th. For the past two weeks, Coiny had been searching around Yoyle City, trying to find Leafy before FreeSmart did. But he eventually realized that Leafy probably wouldn't have stayed in Yoyle City, even after freeing Firey.

He found her two days after leaving the city and searching the land around it. He followed a set of footprints into some bushes and found the metal leaf napping. But she quickly woke up and jumped to her feet, brandishing a knife.

"Whoa! Hold on, Leafy!" Coiny raised his hands in self-defense and backed up a few steps. "It's just me."

Leafy lowered the knife. "Oh. Er, hi, Coiny."

Coiny pointed to the knife. "How did you do that?"

Leafy looked down at her hand. "Uh, I don't know, actually. I've just been able to create knives from thin air ever since I got to Yoyleland, for some reason." She conjured a knife in her other hand. "But I'm not able to get rid of them." The knives were tossed into a much larger pile that Coiny hadn't noticed before.

"Weird." Coiny shook his head. "But I didn't come to discuss magic tricks. I came to warn you about something."

"Oh?" Leafy sounded interested. "Do tell."

"It's FreeSmart. They're-"

"FreeSmart?"

Coiny had momentarily forgotten that Leafy hadn't competed in BFDIA, so she didn't know the alliance's team name. "Er, Pencil's alliance. FYI, Ruby,

Book, and Ice Cube are part of it now. But none of them are really that bad, except, you know, Match and Pencil."

"Yeah." A stormy look crossed leafy's face at the mention of Pencil.

"The thing is, Pencil and Match learned you freed Firey, and now they want to find and trap you in a similar way."

"Hmf. I'd like to see them try." Another knife materialized in Leafy's right hand and she spun it through her fingers. She allowed a small smile onto her face.

Coiny chuckled. "Right. You're not defenseless. But still, it's six against one, and even with your knives, those aren't amazing odds."

"Point taken." Leafy tapped her finger onto the point of her knife, then threw it in the pile with the others.

"So just be careful out here. You might find unwanted guests at your doorstep. Er, bushstep." Coiny tapped his hand against his side restlessly as another thought popped into his head. "Another thing. You said a few weeks ago that the city wasn't safe. What did you mean?"

Leafy's smile disappeared. "I don't really want to talk about it."

"Come on, why not?"

"You wouldn't believe me."

"Try me."

Leafy stayed silent.

Coiny cleared his throat. "Ok. Uh, well, I'm gonna head back now. Again, stay safe."

He turned to leave, but Leafy said, "Wait!"

Coiny turned again. "Yeah?"

Leafy fidgeted with another knife. "Can you... try to see what's up with Firey? I don't think he's actually forgotten me, and I want to know why

he's avoiding me."

Coiny smiled. "Sure. I'll try to talk some sense into him."

Leafy opened her mouth to reply-

"Coiny!"

"Huh?" Coiny shook his head again and his mind returned to the real world. Everyone was looking at him weirdly, even Rocky. "You ok, man?" Nickel asked. He sounded a little worried.

The copper coin rubbed his forehead. "Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine. Just... thinking about something."

Pillow kept staring for another moment before looking at Ruby again. "How can you tell that these are *Leafy's* knives, and not somebody else's?"

"Believe me," Needle responded. "If you had been chased 2763 miles by a swarm of those knives, you'd know what they looked like."

"So Leafy's roaming around the city," Gelatin noted. "Should we tell the others?"

"FreeSmart already knows," Coiny pointed out. "So do Fries, Firey, and Pin. I don't know about anyone else, though."

"That reminds me. Ruby!" Gelatin turned to Ruby.

"Ye?"

"I wanted to ask you why you're not with the other members of your alliance right now. You're with them so often nowadays, we barely ever get to hang out anymore!" he complained, crossing his arms in annoyance.

"Oh! They're sleeping in. They stayed up till, like, 4 in the morning because of the party." Ruby patted Gelatin's arm. "Don't worry, though! I'll try to find more time to hang with you. Ok?"

Gelatin uncrossed his arms. "Fine."

Needle spoke up. "Is there any point in telling the others? Some of them might try to go after her. If we leave her alone, she'll probably leave us alone."

Coiny met Ruby's eyes and subtly shook his head. Needle had been touchy about FreeSmart for the past few months for some reason. It probably wasn't best to keep talking about them in front of her as she might get upset.

"Well." Nickel interrupted everyone's thoughts. "That was a fun experience. I'm gonna go back to being bored now."

"I can help with your boredom, if you want." Gelatin wiggled his eyebrows.

Nickel groaned. "I don't know what you're implying, but if it has anything to do with bungee jumping, I want no part of it."

He walked away. Gelatin, Coiny, Rocky, and Ruby hopped out of the sewer hole. "To be honest, I'm not sure bungee jumping is safe right now, seeing as how there's some sort of scissors-wielding madman on the loose," Gelatin confessed. "But I'm gonna go back to sunbathing. You guys wanna join me?"

Needle and Ruby nodded. Teardrop gave a thumbs-up, and Rocky went, "Mm-HM!"

"No thanks," Pillow said. She stretched and yawned. "I'm going to go explore the city."

"Same here," Coiny agreed. "I was actually trying to find Pin before, you know, all this happened."

At that very moment, the color-drained thumbtack in question was searching for a certain store. A store that sold paint, to be precise. She was hoping that she could restore herself to her original color by coming across a bucket of red paint. However, Yoyle City was like a maze in some parts, and she had spent most of the day searching for this store.

But after many hours, she finally stumbled upon it, close to the western edge of the city. "Finally!" Pin said to herself. "I thought I would die of exhaustion!"

She opened the door to the store only to run into Yellow Face, who was on his way out. "Yellow Face??" she exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"HI, PIN!" Yellow Face said loudly. He wasn't good at controlling his volume levels. "I'M COLLECTING BUCKETS OF PAINT TO STOCK MY WAREHOUSE WITH!" He lifted a heavy-looking rucksack with his non-existent hands. Something metal clanked inside.

"That's cool. As for me, I'm trying to restore my red coloring!" Pin thought of something. "Say, do you have any red paint buckets in that sack of yours?"

"I DO INDEED! WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY ONE?"

Pin was silent for a moment. "Is there any paint left in the store?" she asked after a minute.

"YUP!"

"Thanks. Say, your warehouse sounds kinda interesting. Can I come visit?"

Yellow Face thought about it, but only for a second. "SURE! I'M NOT GOING TO HEAD BACK UNTIL SOMETIME IN APRIL THOUGH, BUT I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I'M ABOUT TO LEAVE!"

"Cool!" Pin opened the door and entered the shop, leaving Yellow Face to head back to the center of the city.

She looked around. Yellow Face had mostly cleaned out the place. Nearly all the shelves were empty. There were only three buckets of each main color left, as well as a bucket of black and a bucket of white.

Pin reached for one of the red buckets, then stopped. Thinking back to her early days in BFDI, she had secretly always wanted to be colored purple. She had grown past it, but she began to seriously

consider taking a bucket of purple paint instead. Just to experiment.

Looking back and forth between the red buckets and purple buckets, Pin pondered the decision carefully for several minutes. Finally, she said, "Screw it," grabbed a bucket of each, and exited the shop, following Yellow Face's path back to the populated part of the city.

Blinking her eyes several times in an attempt to remove her eye grit, Pencil yawned and rolled out of her bed. *What a night,* she thought, remembering the New year's party she had hosted. Partying for several hours straight combined with attempting to clean up had really pooped her out. She, Match, Book, and Ice Cube had all collapsed on their beds the moment they reached their rooms. Ruby had somehow had the energy to stay awake and do other things. Bubble had probably popped somewhere along the line, but she wasn't sure where.

Pencil stretched and yawned again, then went to wake the others. She opened her door to find a quiet Bubble and still-somehow-energetic Ruby at her doorstep. "Oh. Hey, guys," she murmured sleepily. "You're back. Thanks for recovering Bubble, Ruby."

"Hiya, Pencillll!" Ruby grinned wide. "I have some news you might wanna hear."

Pencil yawned a third time as she pushed them out of her way. "In a bit, I have to go wake the others."

"It's about Leafy."

Pencil suddenly felt a lot more awake than before. "In that case, I *definitely* have to go wake the others. Come on!"

Pencil grabbed Ruby's arms and they burst into Book's room together, prompting several annoyed noises from the dictionary. Bubble figured she should go wake up Match and Ice Cube using quieter methods.

"I'm BORED."

Faster than anyone could blink, Robot Flower grabbed Clock by the top of his head and lifted him into the air. She pointed her metallic fist at his face. "You're walking on thin ice, buddy." Then she slammed him onto the floor of the LOL, face-first.

"Hey, calm down!" Gaty stepped in front of Robot Flower as Clock got shakily to his feet, now sporting a new crack in his face. "I know you're annoyed, but we're all in the same boat here." She gestured to the box surrounding them. "Besides, we're about to see the outside world for the first time in several years. Can you at least *try* not to ruin the mood?"

"That reminds me. When are you going to finish??" Snowball complained loudly in the direction of Basketball.

"Hold on, hold on! I'm almost done." Basketball was tinkering with TV to see if she could connect with Roboty's cameras in an attempt to be able to see outside the box. Ever since Lightning had exited the LOL, their only light source was Firey Jr, but he barely did much. "There's a lot of ports on here that I don't recognize," BB continued. "Does anyone know what 'HDMI' stands for?"

"Yeah, it stands for Hbattle Dfor Mdream Island," Blocky snickered. Donut slapped him.

"Take all the time you need, Basketball," Barf Bag said patiently.

Next to her, Bracelety shouted, "OH YEAH! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE ICE CUBE!!"

"I agree with Bracelety," Bottle spoke. "I can't wait to meet all the other objects!"

"Dadadadadadadadadadada. (I, too, simply cannot wait until we escape this blasted prison.)"

"Nobody can understand you, Dora," Puffball said rudely.

Lollipop, who was lying down, sat up. "Well, it's not like you're super easy to understand either, *Puffblob*. Your sparkly voice is starting to

irk me."

Puffball beamed. "Why, thank you! I strive to be as sparkly as possible."

"Don't mention it," Lollipop grumbled.

"Aha!" Basketball exclaimed. She connected two wires, lighting up the room momentarily with a spark. "I might have it. TV, is it working?"

Words flickered onto TVs screen. They read, *Connection established.*

Basketball cheered. "Woohoo! Everyone, come on over here!"

The thirty-something objects all crowded around TV, pushing and shoving each other out of the way to get the best view. There was lots of complaining.

"Ow!"

"Stop that!"

"Who's foot is in my face?"

"That might be mine, sorry."

"I hate this!"

"Quiet down!"

"Shush!"

"No, *you* shush!"

Everyone eventually managed to silent themselves. The words on TV's screen disappeared, replaced by static. Then, suddenly, the static was replaced by a brilliant light, shining over a vast deposit of water - the sun beginning to set over the Goiky Canal. Oohs, ahhs, and general gasps came from the objects watching.

"Wow!"

"This is wonderful!"

"Grassy LIKES this!"

"I forgot how great the sun looks!"

"I HATE this!"

Everyone stopped and stared Fanny. She looked around. "What? The bright light is hurting my eyes!"

They decided to ignore her and turned back to TV. "Can Roboty hear us?" Taco asked.

"-.-- . ... / .. / -.-. .- -. .-.-.-" Roboty's beeping came through TV's speakers, sounding a little tinny. TV automatically translated them and put subtitles on the bottom of his screen. Currently, they said, (Yes I can.)

"Cool!" Taco said. "Can you look around? I want to know exactly where we are."

Roboty obliged, rotating 180 degrees on the spot so that they could get a view of the city. There was even more oohing and ahhing at the sight of the cluster of buildings.

"No way!" Tree exclaimed.

"The Long-Lost Yoyle City... I-I thought that place was just a myth!" Balloony stammered.

Cloudy realized his mouth was hanging open and closed it. "Apparently not, I guess."

"Dadadadadadadadadadada. (Even the most obscure myths have a grain of truth to them, my rubbery companion.)"

Everyone ignored Dora.

Cake spoke up. "Can you head into the city? I want to see the buildings close up! Not to mention the other objects!"

"YEAH!" Bracelety shouted again. "I WANT TO SEE ICE CUUUUUBE!!!" Several people winced at her volume.

"-- .- -.-- -... . / .-.. .- - . .-. --..--" Roboty beeped. "..-. --- .-. / -. --- .-- --..-- / .. / .- -- / -.-. --- -. - . -. - / - --- / ... .. - / --- -. / - .... / -... --- -..- / .- -. -.. / .-- .- - -.-. .... / - .... . / ... ..- -. .-.-.- (Maybe later. For now, I am content to sit on this box and watch the sun.)"

"Fine with me," Marker agreed. He, as well as most of the other trapped objects lay back and prepared to watch the sun set. For once, there was no arguing. Just a group of people relaxing together, in the (artificial) sunlight.

With the sun touching the horizon, the six alliance members had climbed down from the Yoyle Needy and gone to find the sidewalk that Rocky punched a hole into. Match went down first, Followed by Pencil, then Bubble, Ruby, Book, and finally, Ice Cube. "Pee-yoo!" Match held her figurative nose and waved a hand in front of her face. "This place stinks!"

"Does it?" Ruby questioned. "Sorry, my sense of smell was obliterated years ago when I fell asleep next to some of Fries' rotten fries."

Book gave Ruby a strange look.

"Anyway," Ruby went on, "this is definitely the place where I found Leafy's knife. Look, here it is!" She fished it out of the layer of water on the floor.

Match clicked on her flashlight. She pointed it in one of the tunnel's directions and something glinted. Walking over and picking the mystery item up, she called out, "Look! Here's another one!"

"I think I see a third!" Bubble had turned on her own flashlight and was directing the beam past match, where another glimmer of metal could be seen.

"Looks like we've got a breadcrumb trail," Pencil said, excited by the prospect of finding Leafy. "Before we head off, though, Bubble's got to eat a yoyleberry so that she doesn't pop. It might be a while to the end of these sewers."

Pencil pulled out a yoyleberry from behind her and stuffed it into

Bubble's mouth before she could protest. Reflexively, Bubble swallowed the yoyleberry whole and gagged. But the deed was done. Not even a second later, a metallic coating covered Bubble, rendering her immune to any pesky pointer fingers that might try to pop her. Bubble sighed.

"Alrighty, let's go!" Pencil pushed past Match and led the way, waving her hand forward. As the others followed, Bubble paused for a moment and looked at the hole, glimpsing sunlight - the last time she would see it for a month. Distracted, her thoughts turned towards the experimentation she and Ruby were doing with the Science Museum's teleporter. She hoped they would get back soon to continue those...

"Bubble!" Pencil yelled. "You coming or what?"

"Coming!" Bubble scurried to catch up with the others as the sun set upon Yoyle City.

Tada! Lightning-fast update, especially compared to last time, haha. I've actually managed to get the basic plot of the rest of the book (more or less) planned out. I just need to figure out the juicy details and order them.

Because I feel like it, here's a hint of what'll be happening next chapter: two certain someones will be returning to the faraway country of Yoyleland. Can you guess who? ;)

See you in IDFB 6 :)

IDFB 6a: Lights Out

February 1st

"Heads. We go left."

Book twirled the coin through her fingers as she and the rest of FreeSmart took a tunnel going left. After following the trail of Leafy's knives through the sewers of Yoyle City, the trail ended shortly after the six of them encountered a cave system. They quickly got hopelessly lost underground, either flipping a coin or using eeny-meeny-miny-moe to chose which way to go next for the past month. The shape, size, direction, and even temperature of the tunnels varied multiple times as they went along. At one point, it had gotten so hot that Ice Cube began to melt slightly. Luckily they managed to move away from the hot tunnels in time for Icy to live.

Pencil groaned as they hit another dead end. "I guess we gotta go right, then." She turned on the spot, accidentally shining her flashlight in Bubble's face, and began to backtrack.

"Gosh, I'm, like, so tired of being in these stupid tunnels," Match said as she and the others followed Pencil.

"Me too," Pencil and Ruby said in unison. "Jinx! Double jinx!"

Bubble paused to clear the spots from her eyes. The fact that she was still made of Yoyle metal prevented her from popping. "Me too..."

"Well, complaining won't solve anything," Book said firmly. "If we keep going, we'll get out eventually. Looking at the slope of the tunnels, we're closest to the surface that we've ever been."

"But that's a lie," Match said.

"A lie?" Ice Cube asked.

"We're under a mountain. We could still be going up for, like, miles, and not reach the surface," Match pointed out. This shut Book up.

Bubble spoke up. "Who's idea was this again?"

"It was Ruby's."

"What? Noooo," Ruby scoffed. "Trying to find Leafy was YOUR idea, Pencil."

"Well, you were the one to give me the idea!"

"Can you guys just stop!?" Bubble snapped. She turned around and shined her light right in Pencil's face. "I'm just as tired as you are from walking in these tunnels for who knows how long, but we're all in this together. Like Book said, complaining won't solve anything, and neither will arguing! So just be quiet and maybe we can get out of here!" She turned and stomped away, leaving the others speechless.

"What the sharpener?" Pencil muttered after a minute of silence. "I've *never* seen Bubble that angry."

"Me neither," Match admitted. "I'm a bit worried."

"Eh, I'm sure she'll be back to normal soon. Let's just follow her."

"Really?" Match asked as they continued to walk again.

"Yeah! Her bubbly old self will return in no time."

"No, I mean, really? As in, you're really just going to let her be like that?"

"Well... yeah," Pencil replied, a little hesitantly. "Why?"

"Don't you, like, care about her? I think you should go apologize."

Pencil scoffed. "Apologize for what? I was only stating the facts."

"Not really," Ruby muttered under her breath.

Neither Pencil nor Match heard her. "You obviously, like, hurt her

feelings," Match continued.

"Oh, please. There are other people who have hurt her feelings way more than I might have. Like Leafy. Who we are *trying to find."* Pencil gritted her teeth.

The five of them reached the circular chamber where the crossroads was. Match stopped in the middle, forcing Pencil to stop as well. "What's, like, up with you?" the matchstick asked.

"What's up with me? What's up with *you?* You seem to be pretty needy today."

Everyone raised their arms instinctively to block a Needle attack, but nothing came. The arguing continued.

"I'm not needy! That's not even related at all to Bubble!"

"Bubble doesn't MATTER!"

"Hey, woah, calm down!" Book said. She grabbed Pencil and dragged her away before a real fight could start. Ruby did the same to Match. "Let's just find Bubble, ok?"

"That might not be so easy."

"Why not, Ruby?"

"Which way did we come from, again?"

Book's eyes widened as she did a 360, looking around the room. While everyone was distracted by the argument, nobody remembered which tunnel they had come out of.

"Ah, poop," Book muttered.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

Clunk. "Done!" Golf Ball stated happily as the last table slotted into place. "The factory is fully finished and functional!"

Tennis Ball looked around. "It's incredible," he said in awe. "I know you're smart, but if I'm being honest, I didn't really believe that your factory could be taken apart and put back together so simply."

"I know!" Golf Ball beamed. "I actually wasn't sure it would fully work until most of it was done. I'm very proud of it."

"How did you make it so that everything that wasn't bolted down could fold up into little easy-to-carry rectangles?"

"Trade secret." GB allowed herself a smile as they reached the top of the stairs that led to the surface. She looked around, taking in the golden forest surrounding their grassy plain, with Yoyle Mountain in the distance.

She glanced upwards, marking the position of the sun. "It's nearly noon, and today's the first of February. We should get going to make it to the Locker Of Losers in time."

"Agreed." The sports globules began the trek back to Yoyle City. "What about the FreeSmart Supervan?"

"We can return that afterwards. I'm sure they'll be waiting there, too, eager to see who returns from the LOL."

In reality, FreeSmart had their own troubles. The room in which they had flipped the coin in before was a near-perfect upside down dome, and the three tunnels that branched away from it were equidistant from each other. In short, if you weren't paying attention when you entered the room, you wouldn't be able to tell which way was which.

"Rrrg! Great! Now we don't know which tunnel Bubble went through!" Pencil kicked a pebble furiously.

"Well, technically, we do," Ruby said. "We know she went through the tunnel we *didn't* go through last time we were here."

"And, like, which tunnel is that?" Match asked.

"Dunno."

"This is all YOUR fault!" Pencil yelled at Match. "If you hadn't distracted us, we would know which way to go!"

"Me??" Match yelled back. "YOU started the argument! If you-"

"Guys?" Bubble's voice reached their ears.

"Bubble!" Book shouted. "Where are you?"

"I'm not sure." Bubble's voice echoed around the circular chamber, bouncing off every surface and making it impossible to tell which tunnel she was calling from. "I reached a crossroads, but my flashlight just died."

Match gasped. "Oh no. If Bubble's flashlight just, like, died, then mine and Book's might not last much longer!"

"They might be different brands," Pencil pointed out. "We could still have light for a while longer."

Book rubbed the spot above her eyes, where a headache had blossomed. "How are we supposed to tell which tunnel Bubble's voice is coming from?"

"Simple." All eyes turned to Ruby. "We split up!" Without warning, she dashed down one of the tunnels, calling Bubble's name.

"Ruby! No! You don't have a flashlight!" Book frantically chased after Ruby, gripping her own light. Their footsteps faded into the gloom.

Pencil glanced at Match. "Well... I suppose Ice Cube and I are stuck with you."

Match just sniffed in disapproval and walked down one of the tunnels with Icy by her side. Not wanting to be close to Match, but also lacking her own flashlight and not wanting to be stuck without light, Pencil followed at the edge of the flashlight's range.

Pin rubbed the sleep from her eyes as she reached the LOL, where a crowd was already gathered, as usual. She saw Coiny chatting with

Fries, Gelatin chatting with Nickel, and Teardrop playing patty cake with Needle. Rocky was sitting next to Roboty, who was still perched atop the LOL like a sentry. She was a bit surprised to see Pie comforting Woody near the back - neither of them showed up often. But the most surprising duo she found was-

"Golf Ball!? Tennis Ball!?" she exclaimed. "You're back!"

Golf Ball turned around. "That's right! We-" Her smile froze. "You're... purple?"

Pin looked down at her body. "Yup! I found some purple paint a few weeks ago. I was tired of being colorless, so I decided to try something new. What were you guys doing back in the old competing grounds?"

"Remember Golf Ball's underground factory that she built between BFDI and BFDIA?" Tennis Ball asked. Pin nodded. "We were transporting that piece by piece from there to a field nearby, a little behind the mountain."

"Cool!"

GB nodded and turned back towards TB, resuming their previous conversation. Pin sidled over to Coiny and Fries. "Hey guys!" she said. "I'm a little surprised to see you here, Fries."

"Well, I've been managing to get more and more sleep recently. I actually woke up before 11 today." Fries hiccuped. "My hiccups have returned, though."

"I can see."

"How long till noon, d'ya think?" Coiny asked out of nowhere.

"Oh, I don't know. Let me check my watch." Fries lifted his bare wrist and peered at it closely, getting a chuckle from Pin and Coiny.

Gelatin zipped over to them. "I hope that Donut comes back."

Coiny looked at him strangely. "Why Donut? he was pretty rude to everyone in BFDIA."

Gelatin shrugged. "I don't know. I just have this feeling that we'd get along."

"I want to see TV return," Pin spoke up. "He was a cool host! I wish that Firey's Speaker Box hadn't sent him to the TLC after BFDIA 5e."

"Eh, there's only one person I want to come back," Fries mumbled.

Pin was curious. "Who?"

Sudden movement at the edge of her vision caught her attention, and she turned to see two objects land on the ground. She knew one of them.

"Puffball!" Fries cried happily. "You're back! And..." His expression of joy changed to one of confusion. "You have *legs??"*

"Hey!" Pin protested, recognizing the limbs. "Those are MY legs! How dare you?"

"Sorry, Pin," Puffball apologized in her autotune voice. "I've always wanted limbs of my own, so I had to make do."

Coiny butted in. "Uhh, where are her arms?"

"I gave them to Lightning."

The second object sat up and spoke in a monotone voice. "Wow. I can't believe I'm out!" They stood up and waved to the small crowd of objects. "Hello, everyone. I'm Remote!"

"Welcome to Yoyleland, Remote!" Tennis Ball replied cheerfully. "How's everyone inside doing?"

"They've been better since we were able to see what this place looked like." Remote turned and waved again, this time at Roboty.

"Can they hear us?" Golf Ball asked.

"Yes."

"Good." GB climbed on TB's head, then hopped to the top of the LOL. "Listen up, people! I'm going to be taking the wall teleporter and inspecting it. Hopefully, I can find a way to increase the power and get more people to be released sooner." She looked into Roboty's eyes. "So some of you might be coming out sooner than expected."

Roboty beeped in affirmation as GB jumped down from the LOL. The crowd dispersed in twos and threes as GB and TB grabbed the wall teleporter and started to haul it back to the factory. They had work to do.

Some time earlier

"Ruby! No! You don't have a flashlight!" Book frantically chased after Ruby, gripping her own light and making sure it was shining at the floor so that nothing tripped her. Pencil and Match's voices faded away as Book did her best to catch up to Ruby. But the gemstone was faster than her, and after a good two minutes, Book had to stop, panting heavily.

"Roooooooooobeeeeeeee!" Book called out desperately. Only echoes returned.

Oh, what do I do? she thought. She wasn't sure whether she should go

forward and try to find Ruby and Bubble, or head back to Match, Pencil, and Ice Cube. *Ice Cube!* Book remembered suddenly. There was no way she would leave Icy alone with those two.

Getting up, she took a single step forward and the ground rumbled beneath her feet.

Book paused. *Did I do that?* she wondered.

The ground rumbled again. Then the entire tunnel began to shake violently. Book heard shouts of surprise echoing from both ends of the tunnel she was in. The wall next to her cracked, then started to crumble. Book screamed as the tunnel collapsed around her.

Hi

Sorry for the extremely long update, school started so Imma be busier + I was smacked with a lack of motivation like a fish slap

Also I didn't proofread so I'll probably do that tomorrow or something

Cya in the next part, hopefully soon :)

Edit: proofreading done :)) let's hope I didn't miss anything lol

IDFB 6b: Quaky Quandaries 🏔

If Puffball couldn't fly, she would have fallen over when the earthquake hit. Instead she simply floated an inch above the ground, her new legs dangling in the air.

Fries, however, fell onto his face, the ground muffling a hiccup. The earthquake didn't last longer than a couple of seconds, though, so he was able to get back up quickly. "What was that?" he wondered, rubbing his head. One of his fries was now a little mushed.

"Don't look at me. You've been here longer than I have," Puffball answered.

Fries crossed his arms. "I may have been here for 3 and a half years, but there's never been an earthquake before."

"Huh. Well, I hope everyone else is ok."

Bubble coughed violently, trying to dislodge the Titanic's worth of dust she accidentally inhaled. It took a minute, but her throat finally got mostly cleared.

"Ruby?" Bubble called out, then coughed again. There was still lots of dust in the air, but she couldn't see a speck of it. She was plunged into darkness when her flashlight went out a few minutes ago, and the sudden earthquake hadn't made the situation any better.

"I'm here!" Ruby's voice filtered through the dark.

Bubble carefully walked forward, feeling the way with her hand, until she came across the familiar feel of Ruby's smooth and shiny gemstone head. Miraculously, Ruby hadn't shattered. "Ruby!" Bubble cried happily. They hugged.

"What the heck was that?" Ruby asked.

"An earthquake, I guess. I've never felt one before, though."

"Me neither."

Bubble heard Ruby's foot begin to tap on the floor. "Where are the others?" she asked.

"Somewhere behind me, I think. We didn't know which tunnel you went down, so I suggested we split up."

"That's a horrible idea! If we split up down here, we may have never been able to find each other again!"

Before Ruby could respond, another small rumble vibrated through the tunnel. Bubble could hear pebbles and loose bits of rock tumbling down from the walls. "Was that an aftershock?" she asked Ruby.

"I guess..."

Bubble suddenly realized that she could see the rough shape of Ruby. It was still extremely dark, but a few things were now barely visible. "Ruby!" she cried again. "I can see you!"

Ruby frowned (at least, Bubble thought she did). "Yeah, so?"

"It was TOTALLY dark a moment ago. But if there's light streaming in from somewhere..."

Ruby's eyes lit up (not literally). "...then that last aftershock must have opened up a hole to the surface!"

They bumped into each other, then scrambled to pull away at the remaining loose rocks in the walls.

"I found something!" Bubble said as a single ray of sunlight shone straight into her eye. Excited, she rammed into the wall, bursting through. The sheer amount of light blinded her, causing her to trip on some rubble. She fell over and begin to roll down a steep slope - straight towards Yoyle City. "Aaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!!"

Ruby poked her head out and looked up, seeing the peak of Yoyle Mountain far above them. She then leapt out of the hole, turned onto her side, and begin to roll down the mountain, just like Bubble. "Wheeeeeeeeee!!!" Their mixed screams of delight and terror faded into the silence as they tumbled towards civilization.

"Hey, Tennis Ball!"

TB turned around at the sound of his name. "Hi, Fries! It's been a few months. How are the new fries?"

Fries came up next to Tennis Ball with Puffball floating behind them. "It's been... interesting. The actual potatoes taste delicious, but you were right when you said there might be side effects."

"Really? Do tell." Tennis Ball sat down and pulled out a notepad, as well as a pencil.

"First off, there's-" Fries hiccuped. "Well, those. I was plagued with hiccups when I first started using these fries. They went away a while back, but returned yesterday."

"Hiccups..." Tennis Ball muttered as he wrote it down. "What else?"

"I was sleepwalking for a while, and then after that I was just losing sleep."

TB paused. "Sleepwalking? That's quite unusual."

"Yeah. But it gets better." Fries walked over to a tree and, with only a tiny bit of effort, uprooted it. And as if that wasn't enough, he tossed it at a house, taking out the front door. "I have super strength!"

"Wow." Tennis Ball stared at the house in awe, then quickly scratched down *super strength*. "Incredible. Is that all?"

"That's all. I'll tell you if anything changes."

TB closed his notebook, stashed it behind his back, and stood up. "Well, those are certainly some interesting side effects. Thanks for

letting me know. I'll try working on a new strain of grotatoes - hopefully one without any effects."

"Sounds great!"

TB turned to leave, but Puffball spoke up. "Uh, Tennis Ball? Before you go..."

He turned back around. "Yeah?"

"Can you tell Golf Ball that I wanted to say sorry for, er, making us lose in BFDIA 5e?" Puffball looked sheepish. "I can see now that it was wrong to try to lose the challenge, just to try to get a prize."

Tennis Ball smiled. "Sure. And if it makes you feel any better, I don't hold anything against you. You were still pretty new, and you didn't really know yet how vicious the voters could be."

Puffball snorted. "You got THAT right."

"Hey, why are you here, anyway?" Fries asked Tennis Ball. "Didn't Golf Ball say that you guys were going to try to upgrade the wall teleporter?"

"I had to return the FreeSmart Supervan - we used it to transport GB's factory from South Goiky to here." TB leaned in close and lowered his voice. "Please don't tell Pencil or Match that we took it."

"LOOK OUT!" Puffball yelled out of the blue. She rammed into Fries and Tennis Ball, pushing them out of the way. Just in time, too, as Bubble hurdled past them, rolling faster than anyone has ever rolled before (except possibly Tennis Ball himself). She crashed into the house that Fries had thrown the tree into earlier, wrecking it even more.

"Bubble??" Tennis Ball hurried over as Bubble lifted herself from the wreckage of the front wall. "Are you ok?"

"Oohhhggg..." Bubble murmured, swaying on her feet. "W... watch out...!"

"Huh?" Tennis Ball stepped back as Ruby whooshed by and slammed

into Bubble, shattering on impact and knocking Bubble unconscious. "What the tennis court is going on??"

Puffball stood up and shook the dust off of herself. "I think this is my cue to leave," she said awkwardly, walking away.

"Fries!" TB called out. He was trying to lift Bubble, to no avail. Her Yoyle metal body was too heavy. Not to mention that TB didn't have any arms. "Can you help me? I want to take her over to GB's factory to make sure she's alright."

Fries walked over and effortlessly lifted Bubble's limp form over his head. He and TB started to head over to the golden forest together.

Book sneezed automatically, her own sneeze waking her up. She groaned and swiped the pebbles and dust from her face. Luckily, her flashlight had survived the earthquake and was still on.

Book winced as she picked it up, rubbing the back of her head. She had a splitting headache. If she were to guess, a rock had whacked her there and knocked her out. As for how much time had passed since the earthquake - that was impossible to tell.

She shined her flashlight around the small chamber. Both of the previous paths had been blocked off by rubble, but the wall had opened up, revealing a new tunnel. With nowhere else to go, Book went through.

Several minutes of walking with the temperature steadily rising led Book to a large chamber filled with light. She emerged from the dark tunnel onto a thin ledge to witness a large lake of glowing lava bubbling far below her. "Woah," she said. The sheer amount of lava had her awestruck.

Suddenly, one of her corners burst into flames from the heat. "Ahh!" Book dropped her flashlight in a panic and quickly extinguished the fire by patting it down. She sighed.

Movement caught her attention, and she glanced down to see her flashlight rolling towards the edge. "No!" She leapt to the ground and

managed to snag the flashlight just as it began to tilt off the side. "Phew..."

Backing out of the heat-filled chamber, Book shined her light around the tunnel that led there. It was a dead end, and she hadn't seen any crossroads earlier. Poking her head back into the large room, Book looked around and spotted a thin ledge, even thinner than the one at the entrance, snaking around the wall of the chamber. At the bottom, where the lava was, there was a small corner of rock poking out. Next to that corner was a hole in the wall that supposedly led to another tunnel.

Lovely, Book groaned inwardly. *Only one way through, and it's incredibly dangerous. Naturally, the only other people who know I'm down here are also trapped and won't be able to recover me if I burn.*

She sighed. *Here goes nothing, I guess.*

Gently, Book lowered herself to the first of the ledges, beginning a tricky trek down to the next tunnel.

Images flashed through Bubble's mind. Pencil, Match, Ice Cube, Book, and Needle trapped together in a different world, of sorts. Space, but dotted with multicolored stars, the points of light changing color constantly. Flashes of red. Lots of red. And a face. More red. The face again. Lots and lots and lots and lots and lots and-

Splash! A bucket of freezing cold water was dumped onto Bubble's face, waking her up instantly. "Ahg!" she spluttered. She sat up so quickly that she startled Tennis Ball into falling over. "What? Who? Where?"

"There we go," Golf Ball grumbled, pushing the now-empty bucket off her head. "I was beginning to think she'd never wake up."

Bubble rubbed her head, where there was a dent in the metal from crashing into the house. "What happened?"

"You were rolling, for some reason, really fast down the street," Tennis Ball explained. "Then you crashed into a house, so Fries

carried you over here, to Golf Ball's underground factory. I wanted to make sure you were ok."

"How long have I been out?"

"Several hours," Golf Ball stated plainly.

"Oh..." Bubble sighed. "Well, besides a bit of a headache, I think I'm fine."

"Good to hear!" TB said happily. "Now, when we last talked, you said you wanted us to look into your friends having some weird memory issue. Is that still a problem?"

"Yes, I think. Although they haven't mentioned anything about it since November."

"Alright then," Golf Ball spoke. "We'll keep our end of the bargain. Tomorrow, I will start working on a device that can read people's minds, so that we can see exactly what happened."

"Well, I think that they may have been mind-wiped, or something. Possibly. I'm not sure." Bubble tapped her foot against the ground nervously.

GB *hmmed.* "That may be a problem. But I'll worry about that when I come to it. Where are Pencil and Match, anyway?"

"Oh my bubble blower!" Bubble shot up from the bed, suddenly remembering the earthquake. "They're still down there!"

"Down there? Down *where?"*

Bubble quickly explained how her and the rest of FreeSmart had been looking for Leafy, gotten trapped underground for a month, and how they got separated during the earthquake.

"So Leafy's been lurking around the city?" Golf Ball *hmmed* again. "That's troubling, but good to know. Thank you for telling us."

"So then what are we going to do about FreeSmart?" TB asked.

GB turned on the balls of her feet and walked across the room towards a familiar-looking machine. "The way I see it, going underground would only make the situation worse. Even if we used something to mark which way we came from, there's always the possibility of another earthquake."

"I agree," Bubble said. "I don't want to go back down there any time soon."

"It's possible that the quake may have already killed them, and we can just recover everyone once we're back at the city. If not, then I'm sure they'll find their own way out eventually. Pencil may be a jerk, but she's not stupid." Then, under her breath, she added, "Mostly."

Bubble didn't deny it.

"Anyway! Moving on!" Golf Ball reached the device and slid it onto her head. Bubble recognized it as the wall teleporter, but with what appeared to be a car battery attached to it. "While you were snoozing away, TB and I managed to upgrade the wall teleporter. Not only can it now teleport THREE people before having to recharge-" GB motioned to the battery with one foot. "-but the recharge time has also been shortened! Instead of four weeks, it's now three. In conclusion, waiting three months will now release TWELVE people instead of six. It's a 100% increase!"

"Wow, that's incredible!" Bubble was truly surprised.

"Indeed! Let's go use the last of this month's charge to free one more person from the LOL." Golf Ball headed towards the stairs that led to the surface, and Tennis Ball and Bubble followed. "If I could, I would keep trying to increase the output, but I believe that this is as much as the wall teleporter can take. If I *were* to try to make it more powerful, it may break, and I wouldn't know how to fix it."

"I've already said this, Golf Ball, but it doesn't need to be perfect," Tennis Ball argued. "I mean, we originally thought it would take over three years of teleporting to release everyone, but you've improved it so much now that everyone will be out and about by-" He did a quick calculation in his head. "-sometime in October! Stop beating yourself up about 'not being able to improve it enough.' You've done what

you've can."

Golf Ball grumbled a thanks.

They reached the surface after a minute of climbing steps in silence. "Oh yeah," TB said suddenly. "I forgot to say that Fries let me borrow his anti-Yoyler so that you can be a regular bubble again."

He pulled out a button, set it on the grass, and pressed it with his foot. Bubble felt like her face was being wiped, cleaning away all the metal. In only a second, she was no longer metal. "Thanks, TB."

"No problem."

Another minute of walking in silence continued before Bubble spoke up. "I just remembered... there's something else I wanted to talk to you guys about."

GB paused to balance the wobbling teleporter perched on her head. "What is it? Because I'm not inclined to do any more favors."

"No, I don't need a favor. I just thought you guys might find this interesting." Bubble sighed. "I think... I think we go to another dimension when we die."

Holy moly, there is so much more plot and foreshadowing in this chapter than I expected. GB and TB getting huge parts this chapter cause- well, I ain't gonna say another word about that, heh

I don't really have much else to say here. Stay safe, and I'll see you in IDFB 7 :)

IDFB 7a: Discoveries and Recoveries NEW

February 21st

Book silently trudged through the seemingly endless tunnel, dragging her feet. It was impossible for her to tell how long she'd been down there alone, but it felt like ages. She hadn't spoken to someone in so long, she wasn't sure her voice would work if she tried to speak. The flashlight she used was miraculously still working, even after being on for several hours a day every day.

She tripped over something. Book looked down and saw the old, old remains of a campfire. Her mood lifted. A sign of life!

She stood back up and shined her light around, then gasped when it landed on the far wall. It was adorned with several drawings and various writing in an ancient language. The drawings disturbed her, showing her things that shouldn't have been known about at the time of drawing, based on how old they looked. Yoyle City, the HPRC, Evil Leafy, and something that looked suspiciously like a UFO, as well as a few more.

Stepping closer, she read out loud the only line that was written in English. "If death fosters birth, then the world will burn... hmm."

Putting her free hand to her 'chin,' she did her best to decipher the rest of the text. Since it appeared to be a much older form of Yoylese, she could read some words and guess others. Not much - but what she did translate was troubling.

After a couple minutes of headache-inducing reading, Book finally decided to move on. She could worry about what was on that wall once she found her way back to the surface. Thankfully, it turned out to be not that long at all. Less than a minute after walking away from

the cave art, she saw something. Light. Sunlight.

Book rushed forward and was soon blinded by the sheer brightness of the sun. She breathed deeply, savoring her first breath of fresh air in almost two months, content to just let the sun shine on her for a bit.

A moment passed, and Book was able to see again. She looked around, spotting Yoyle City only a few minute's walk away. Turning off her flashlight and silently marveling at how long it had lasted, she sprinted over to the city, eager to be in civilization again.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

Ding! Golf Ball popped out of the Hand-Powered Recovery Center, transforming from a 2-D circle into a 3-D sphere in an instant. Tennis Ball took his foot off the crank. "Well?" he asked.

Golf Ball stood up. "Nothing," she grunted, frustrated. "40 times I've died now, and I don't remember anything about the supposed 'dead zone.'"

"'Dead zone?'"

"That's what I'm calling the other dimension that Bubble claims we go to when we die."

"Since when?"

"Since now."

The spherical duo started walking towards the LOL, as it was nearly noon. "Well, Bubble's much more fragile than you are," Tennis Ball pointed out. "She's probably died more than anyone else, so it may take a while for you to notice anything. Also, she's not even fully sure herself, remember? She described it as 'having a muddy feeling about something' after getting recovered."

"I suppose you're right," GB admitted.

"Besides, I'm a little worried about us using your factory's incinerator.

I know it's the most efficient way to die, since you disabled the Golf Ball Safety Net, but what if we were to both fall in? Nobody would know to recover us."

Golf Ball scoffed. "Puh-leeze. As if that would actually happen."

The two traversed through the city in silence for a few minutes before they came across Saw, who spotted them and ran over. "Hey guys!" she called out cheerfully.

Golf Ball groaned. "Hello, Saw."

Saw slowed as she reached them. "I just want to thank you again for freeing me as the third person a few weeks back."

Tennis Ball rolled his eyes but grinned anyway. "Yes, we know you're thankful. You've said so several times over the past three weeks. And you should be really thanking the voters, not us - it's them that caused you to be the third most voted."

"Right, right. Anyway, how's it going?"

"Not too badly," Golf Ball answered. "I've been conducting a few experiments over the last couple weeks, some of them with TB here. Actually, TB, I discovered something last night that I meant to tell you earlier today." She turned to face both of them. "I was taking soil samples of the ground around Yoyle City, to see if I could find out what unique properties this place has that allows it to produce Yoyleberries, when I discovered something extraordinary. Signs in the soil suggest that not one, but TWO deciduously insulated buried forests exist nearby!"

"Wow!" Tennis Ball exclaimed.

Saw was confused. "Darth Sidious what?"

"Not Darth Sidious," GB huffed. *"Deciduously* insulated-"

"Another term for it is inverted planet," Tennis Ball interrupted. "It's a natural formation that occurs underground - a large, spherical space where the *inside* is decorated with plants, water, and even a little miniature sun. Hence the name inverted planet."

"Woah. That sounds so cool!" Saw said, a little giddily. "I really want to visit one. Where are they?"

"I have yet to determine the locations," Golf Ball replied. "I suspect that one may lie below Yoyle City, perhaps even right under our feet. As for the other, all I know is that it's *somewhere* in Yoyleland."

"I can help you try to locate them later," Tennis Ball offered.

GB shook her head. "No thanks. I have a different idea for something else later today that I plan to work on alone. But thank you for the offer."

"Oh. Ok."

Another few minutes of walking brought them close to the Locker Of Losers, but before they got there, a small crowd was already heading back.

"Did we miss it?" TB asked Fries as he passed.

Fries stopped and hiccupped. "Yeah, some people named Lollipop, Taco, and Balloony were freed," he replied. Saw gasped in delight and sprinted towards the LOL. Tennis Ball remembered her mentioning that Lollipop and Taco were her friends.

"Oh, Fries! Before you go!" TB called out suddenly. He pulled out a large green and yellow packet of seeds. "I've developed a new strain of grotatoes. Hopefully, they won't have the same, err, side effects that the current ones have."

Fries took the packet. "Thanks, Tennis Ball! That's really appreciated."

"Ooh, more grotatoes?" Coiny popped up from behind Fries. "I hope those things taste as good as the first ones did! Cause they were DEEE-"

Fries put his hand over Coiny's mouth. "Shush! I don't want you to burst my eardrums again with cries of 'delicious.' It was bad enough the first time."

"Well, I'm glad you guys enjoyed the first ones." TB smiled as Fries

and Coiny waved and walked off back into the city, then turned to GB. "I'm going to go meet the new people."

"Alright. See you later!"

They nodded at each other as TB continued on to the LOL and GB headed back to her underground factory. "I should really create some form of faster transportation to get to and from the factory," she grumbled to herself.

Then the ground rumbled.

Bubble and Ruby climbed the stairs in sync as they reached the second floor of the Science Museum. They ignored nearly all of the exhibits, beelining towards an unassuming archway in a corner of the room, sitting on a raised pedestal. Attached to the left side of the archway was a control panel, each button, lever, and switch having a post-it note stuck on or next to it. Nearly three months ago, Bubble and Ruby had written down the Yoylese symbols that labelled the controls and brought them to Book for translation. With her help, they now knew how to operate the archway and had been experimenting with it by sending various items through. But they could only do it once every couple weeks. Apparently, all teleportation devices have a long recharge time.

Ruby reached the panel first and began tapping away at it, entering the startup sequence. The light at the top of the archway winked on and turned red.

Bubble glanced around the room. "What do you think we should try today?"

"I dunno," Ruby said, pressing more buttons. "Something big? We've only teleported small things so far."

Bubble *hmmed* and pointed her gaze at a large statue in the center of the room. She bent down and peered at the golden plaque set in the base. Because Book had taught both of them the Yoylese alphabet, she could now read what was engraved there. "Rest in peace Rick

May..." she mumbled to herself. "Who's that?"

"I dunno," Ruby repeated. "Doesn't sound like any object I've heard of." The gemstone pressed a final button and flicked a final switch, causing the light to turn orange. The machine began to hum. "But it's big, so it'll do."

Ruby hopped away from the controls and stared at the statue. "It looks heavy. I don't know if I can lift this by myself, and you're pretty weak."

Bubble smiled. "That's where you're wrong. I may have a fragile body, but my physical strength is actually quite strong! I bet I could hold up Spongy and five other objects at once."

Bubble wiggled her fingers, then grabbed the statue and pulled it towards her. The statue wobbled, then fell towards her, but she caught it. "Easy.. peasy!" She grunted under the effort. Ruby came to her aid by grabbing the base and lifting it. Together, they slowly hefted it towards the archway.

Suddenly, the building shook. "Another earthquake??" Ruby exclaimed in disbelief. "I thought we were done with those!"

The shaking caused Ruby to lose her grip, and the base of the statue slammed into the ground. Bubble pushed the metal memorial upwards as hard as she could. It hovered in place for a split second, allowing Bubble to leap free before it crashed down right on top of where she was standing. The two alliance members grabbed ahold of something solid to steady themselves.

The quake died down after a moment. Bubble was reluctant to move, in case another one occurred. "That was worse than the one a few weeks ago," she said, half to herself.

She heard a sharp intake of breath next to her. Bubble turned and gasped like Ruby. The statue had fallen right through the apex of the archway, wrecking it. There was no way they'd be able to continue using it.

"Aw, man," Ruby complained. "Well, at least we won't have to make

excuses to where we're going to Match and Pencil anymore."

"Match and Pencil!" Bubble exclaimed. She dashed down the stairs and exited the museum at lightning speed, ignoring the flash of red in the first room.

As she sped to the HPRC, she recalled trying to recover Match, Pencil, Ice Cube, and Book at least once a day since she and Ruby found their way out of the tunnel system, but with no luck. Those four had stubbornly managed to stay alive for another three weeks.
But, Bubble thought hopefully, *maybe that earthquake caused some rocks to crush them, so I might be able to bring them back!*

She made it to the HPRC in record time and desperately entered Match's name. To her delight, the machine did not say that Match was still alive. "Yes!" Bubble cheered. She turned the handle as quickly as she could and recovered Match. "Match! You're back!"

"Bubble! I'd, like, hug you right now if you wouldn't pop," Match exclaimed. They did an air hug instead. "That earthquake that just happened just, like, crushed me. I think it crushed Pencil and Ice Cube, too."

They hurriedly recovered Pencil and Icy as Ruby ran up, puffing heavily. "Wow, Bubble. You're fast!" she panted. Then she hugged everyone. "Where's Book?"

Bubble's face fell. "We couldn't recover her. I guess she's still alive down there somewhere-"

"Oh my graphite!" Pencil shouted happily. "The FreeSmart Supervan is back!" She rushed over and hugged the side of the van quickly, then broke away. "Well, since we're at a dead end with Leafy right now, I say we find something to protect this from anyone ever using it again. Speaking of, we also need to find out *who* used it." She turned to the rest of the FreeSmarters. "Did anyone see who returned this?"

Everyone shook their head no. Bubble started to sweat.

Unfortunately, Pencil noticed. "Bubble?" she asked slowly. "Is there

something you're not telling me?"

Bubble shook her head again, harder this time, and began to sweat even more.

Pencil wagged a finger at her. "I think you know something, Bubble." Then she froze. "No. Did *you* take it?"

"It was Golf Ball and Tennis Ball!" Bubble shouted. Then she almost clamped her mouth shut with her hands, but stopped herself before she popped herself.

"Aha!" Pencil shouted. "I should have known it was them. That bozo brain bossy bot always sticks her nose in where it doesn't belong."

"What's a nose?" Ruby asked.

"That's not important right now."

"So what do we, like, do?" Match asked.

Pencil whirled around to Bubble. "Bubble," she asked.

"Y-yeah?"

"Why did you let GB and TB take the Supervan?"

Bubble sighed. "Well... remember a few months ago, where you guys disappeared for a month and didn't remember anything? Actually, stupid question. My point is, I let them use the Supervan in exchange for them to... I don't know, read your mind or something. To figure out what happened, because I'm worried, Pencil."

Pencil just stared at Bubble, not moving a muscle. Bubble felt like she was shrinking under her gaze. Match, Ruby, and Ice Cube swiveled their heads back and forth between the two. Nobody uttered a word.

Then, without warning, Pencil cracked a huge smile. "Ok!" she said.

"Huh?"

"I said, ok!" Pencil repeated. "Tonight, we'll go find bozo br- er, Golf

Ball and Tennis Ball and let them do... whatever." Pencil finally broke her staring contest with Bubble, glancing over at Match. "Match, wanna come with?"

"Like, you bet!"

"Hold on," Ruby interrupted. "Last time I saw you guys, you were having a huge argument. What happened?"

"Oh, we're, like, friends again!" Match wrapped her arm around Pencil's 'shoulders,' and Pencil did the same to Match. "You know we were down there for a couple of weeks. One day, we just, like, decided to sit down and sort it out."

"Yeah!" Pencil agreed, turning her gaze to Ice Cube. "And what was said down there, *stays* down there," she said forcefully to the chunk of solid water.

Icy kept her mouth shut.

Pencil extracted her arm from Match's entanglement of limbs. "Anyway! I'm exhausted. I'm going to go take a nap on top of the Yoyle Needy and soak up some sun. Feel free to join me." She turned on the balls of her feet and instantly bumped into someone.

Book.

Ayyy, some form of motivation has returned! I think.

Two things. 1: I changed the title of the previous chapter to "Quaky Quandaries" (it used to be just "Discoveries") cause I think it fit this chapter better. 2: I went back to older chapters

and removed Bubble's accent from everything lol. It jut annoyed me that it existed earlier but not in more recent chapters

That's all for today folks!

IDFB 7b: Revenge!

Golf Ball grunted as she finally propelled the miniature seismograph from the top of her head and into the river of glue trailing from the FreeSmart Supervan. *There,* she thought. *Now no earthquake can knock that over.*

She paused to wipe the sweat from her brow with her foot, before retracing her steps back to the factory. After the large earthquake that occurred earlier, she realized that she had never felt one in Yoyleland before the beginning of February. The fact that there had been two in the span of three weeks, when there were none for at least three years beforehand, troubled her. The readings on the seismograph after a few days would hopefully have some answers.

An hour of walking and sweating later, Golf Ball reached her factory and descended into its depths once more, already planning something else. Her mind was constantly moving, planning, thinking, always full of thoughts and theories and hypotheses and ideas of what to do next, calculating her next move to the last details. Currently, her mind wandered over to something that she had felt when she and Tennis Ball visited the Science Museum a few months ago...

GB shook her head to get rid of the thought as she reached the factory floor. Something about revisiting that memory made her feel frightened, and she didn't like that feeling. What made the situation worse is that she didn't know *why* that particular memory scared her, and if there's anything Golf Ball hated, it was not knowing something.

But she couldn't help thinking about those who made the museum. She knew almost nothing about the "others" who built this city and inhabited it before the objects of Goiky did. Who were they? *What* were they? Where did they go and why did they leave?

GB had no answers for the first two questions, or the last one, but a hypothesis about the third had formed inside her head. Perhaps the

"others" simply went into space. So she decided to try creating something that could detect alien spaceships within the solar system. There was a good chance that the "others," if they even *were* in space, were no longer in the local solar system, or even in the Goiky Way galaxy. But as long as there was a chance, it was worth trying.

Golf Ball reached her workbench, sat down, and got to work.

Book peered through the doorway of the Science Museum as Ruby bounded past her and into the building. "Are you sure this is a good idea?" she asked nervously.

"Oh, wake up and smell Flower's coffee, Book - this place won't hurt you!" Ruby trilled. "Bubble and I have been here a bunch of times and nothing ever happened to us!"

Reluctantly, Book stepped into the museum. "I still don't get why Pencil and Match don't want to focus on Leafy anymore," she said, changing the subject. "Even after I told them about the area where Leafy probably found her way into the sewer system, and might possibly be hiding."

"Wouldn't you want a break from thinking about Leafy after trying to find her the first time resulted in all of us getting lost underground?"

"Good point."

Something flashed red at the edge of Book's vision, but disappeared before she could get a proper look. She suddenly felt a lot more nervous and rushed up the stairs to get out of that room, forcing Ruby to follow.

"What are we searching for again?" Book asked as they reached the second floor.

"Pencil told us to look for anything that can protect the FreeSmart Supervan from intruders. Like, I dunno, a lock or something!"

Book glanced around the room, but didn't see anything that might work for their situation.

The allied duo continued up through the floors of the Science Museum and searched for several minutes. They saw lots of different exhibits, including things like a clay model of a white whale, the Holy Grail, a mini pirate ship without a sail, air mail, a volcano fail, some pyramids (not to scale), and some things I should not go into detail. There was also a tiny wooden shed (with a bed), some spiders and the undead, an arrow head, some local bread, and a giant spool of golden thread. But there was still nothing of use to be found.

Book and Ruby rushed through the entryway of the 14th floor and slammed the door shut, quickly moving a large shelf to block it. And not a moment too soon. The doorframe shuddered as the small army of robotic arachnids and zombies - who had woken up when they passed through the last floor - slammed against it.

Book leaned against the wall. "Ruby! You said this place wasn't dangerous!"

The gemstone looked sheepish. "Well, to be fair, Bubble and I never went past the second floor."

Book groaned and decided to take a look around. This floor was considerably darker than the rest, the result of having fewer windows. But there wasn't much to look at - there were only five exhibits on display. An abnormally large pair of scissors sat between a sword and a small, unassuming wooden box. Also next to the box was a medium-sized statue of the number one, colored a rich blue, and further away from the other four inanimate objects, a glass sphere sat alone on a pedestal.

Ruby pointed to the sword and bounded over to it. "We can use this to fight our way out of this room!"

"I suppose..."

Walking to the other end of the gallery, Book stopped abruptly. There wasn't a staircase to the next floor, as there *was* no next floor. "That's odd," she muttered to herself. "I thought there were way more floors." Turning around, she spotted the number 14 hanging above the blocked doorway they had come through and realized something.

"Ruby?"

"Yeah?"

"Wasn't the floor we were on before this one the 12th floor?"

Ruby paused to ponder it. "I think so."

"Then why isn't there a 13th floor?"

Ruby followed Book's gaze and saw the 14. "Huh. I guess the builders of this museum were superstitious." She continued to inspect the sword.

A sparkle in the dark caught Book's attention, and she turned to see the previously unimpressive glass sphere glowing with a strong light. "A crystal ball," Book whispered to herself in awe. Entranced, she slowly shuffled over to it and gazed in the center. Images flashed inside, too fast and blurry for her to see, hypnotizing her. Slowly, the images began to become recognizable...

With Book entranced by the crystal ball and Ruby looking over the sword, neither of them noticed the statue of the number one grow a face. It took one look at Book and clicked its tongue in disapproval. "Now, now, Book, we can't have you see what's happening next," the number spoke in tones too high for either object to hear. "That privilege has already been claimed by someone else..."

The statue grew an arm, then casually swiped at the wooden box next to it, causing the box to topple to the floor.

Thump! The sudden noise of something heavy hitting the ground snapped Book out of her trance. The visions in the crystal ball vanished, and the glow faded as quickly as it had started. Book blinked, unsure of what had just happened.

"Book! Come see this!" The BFDI guidebook glanced towards Ruby's voice, past the inert crystal ball to see something lying on the floor that definitely wasn't there before - a giant jawbreaker. Her jaw dropped open. "Where did that come from?" she asked.

Ruby bent down and picked up the wooden box, which had also

fallen. It was now open. "I think it came from this..."

Slowly, Ruby touched the silver clasp on the front of the box to the giant jawbreaker. In an instant, the gobstopper shrunk down to normal size and flew into the container. It snapped shut.

They both stared at the box. Ruby opened it again and out came the jawbreaker, growing and growing until it had reached its normally abnormal hugeness. "That's so COOL!" Ruby shouted.

Book snapped her fingers, getting an idea. "Hey! We can use this for the FreeSmart Supervan!"

"Huh?" Ruby looked confused.

"Whenever Pencil doesn't need the van, she can use this box to store it until she needs it again!"

"Hey, that's a great idea!"

Book's mood suddenly soured. "But I just remembered that we've got to fight through a mob of robots to get out of here..."

"Wait." Ruby put her pointer finger to her lips, indicating that they should be silent. The sounds of fighting could be heard from the other side of the blocked door. "Are they... fighting themselves?"

Book shrugged just as the noises stopped. They waited a minute, then, after not hearing anything, they pushed the shelf out of the way and opened the door. The ruined bodies of mechanical spiders and zombies littered the stairwell.

"Huh." Ruby said after a moment. "Looks like we won't have to fight them after all."

Much later

Although she didn't know it, the sun had set by the time Golf Ball finished her device. She twisted in the final screw just as she heard footsteps. "Hey," she called out behind her, not bothering to look.

"Hey." Tennis Ball's voice returned the greeting.

Setting the screwdriver down, Golf Ball pressed the large green button below the screen on her newly finished Unidentified Flying Object Detector. Said screen turned white, then two words popped up - *Booting up...*

Satisfied, GB stood up and turned to see TB precariously balancing the body of Remote on his head. "Woah. What happened?"

"We were playing tetherball, and she just stopped out of nowhere," Tennis Ball claimed. "I think her batteries are dead. Do we have any down here?"

"There are lots of regular-sized batteries." Golf Ball quickly inspected Remote. "But I'm pretty sure we don't have any Remote-sized ones. However, it shouldn't be too hard to make a couple."

"Great."

Tennis Ball was obviously struggling under the weight of Remote. Golf Ball was about to offer to help when TB staggered over to the nearest table and let Remote's body slide onto it, knocking a cardboard box of multicolored crystals to the floor. "Nooo!" GB screeched. She rushed over as a shattering sound emanated from somewhere behind the table.

Tennis Ball cringed. "Sorry!"

Golf Ball bent down to look under the table, but the crystals were nowhere to be seen. "...where are they?"

"Huh?"

She straightened herself and looked around, dumbfounded. There was nothing else around the table that the crystals could have rolled behind. "They just... vanished."

Tennis Ball apologized again. "Were they important?" he asked.

"I don't know. I only harvested them yesterday from a cave I found between here and Yoyle City. But..." Golf Ball was still extremely

confused. "How did they just disappear like that?"

TB *hmmed.* "Well, there must be SOME logical explanation. We just don't know it."

Intelligence returned to GB's eyes, and she shook her head to dissolve the confusion. "Yes. Yes, you're right."

TB smiled. It took more than a little mystery to stop Golf Ball from thinking rationally for more than five minutes.

"Anyway," GB changed the subject. "I set up a seismograph by the HPRC, to monitor the recent earthquakes-"

"I saw."

"-and I was just about to go take a look to see if it has anything. Would you like to join me?"

Tennis Ball glanced at Remote's lifeless form, then back at Golf Ball. "Sure. I guess we can work on a battery for Remote tomorrow."

Without responding, Golf Ball rotated on her feet and began to climb the steps to the surface. *Mental note to self: in addition to creating a form of transport from nearby Yoyleland to Yoyle City, install an elevator in the factory,* she told herself.

Bubble was lost in thought as she, Match, and Pencil strolled towards the underground factory entrance. "This is just like old times," Pencil said. "Only the three of us. No Ruby, no Book, and no annoying Ice Cube."

"I sort of, like, miss the old days," Match sighed. "However, I DON'T miss that annoying speaker box. Or any of the other speaker boxes."

"Me neither. I mean, sure, battling for a luxury island and whatnot was cool sometimes. But those speaker boxes were cruel with some of the things they made us do!" Pencil shuddered at the thought of coming into close contact with Spongy.

"Bubble?" Match waved her hand in front of Bubble's face. "Are you, like, there?"

Bubble blinked. "Yeah. I'm just thinking about stuff, and- woah!"

They had reached the entrance to the factory, and she was forced to jump backwards to avoid bumping into Golf Ball and popping.

Golf Ball stopped cold. She met Pencil's eyes and narrowed her own. "Pencil."

Pencil smiled a dazzling smile. "Well, hello there, my fine, dimpled friend!"

Bubble stared. This was not the Pencil she knew.

GB narrowed her eyes further. "What do you want? And how are you here? I thought you were trapped underground."

"Don't you remember? Bubble said she asked you guys to root around in my head. Or something."

"They died in that earthquake earlier today, and I was able to recover them," Bubble explained.

"Well, I'm having second thoughts about helping you," GB said to Pencil, never breaking her gaze.

Pencil put her hand over her where her heart would be if she had one and gasped dramatically.

"Please, Golf Ball?" Bubble pleaded. "I'm really worried about what happened to them."

"GB, come on," Tennis Ball argued. "We made a deal. Besides, Bubble *did* really help us out..."

For a good ten seconds, Golf Ball didn't back down. She and Pencil kept staring at each other, Pencil with a large smile. Finally, Golf Ball closed her eyes and sighed in defeat. "Alright. I suppose the seismograph can wait. There should be an MMR somewhere in the factory..."

"Yoy!" Bubble cheered.

GB turned and led the way back into the factory, the four other objects following behind her. Her instinct was telling her that Pencil could not be trusted, and her instinct was usually right. But she steeled her resolve and kept moving.

Meanwhile, although Bubble was glad that Golf Ball would keep her end of the deal, she still felt a bit worried. Pencil wasn't acting like her normal self, and she kept exchanging glances with Match. It was almost like they were having a telepathic conversation. *What are you up to?* Bubble wondered.

Suddenly, she was dead. Her eyes instantly adjusted to the endless darkness of the dead zone, quickly realizing that she had been popped. Again.

Less than a moment later, Tennis Ball popped into existence right next to her, screaming at the top of his lungs. Bubble winced at the sudden noise.

TB stopped abruptly. "Wh... what happened?" he stuttered. "Where am I?"

"Welcome to the place we go when we die," Bubble said, absolutely deadpan.

Tennis Ball whirled around to look at Bubble, startled by her voice. Then his eyes focused on something behind her. Looking back, Bubble saw that Tennis Ball's screams had attracted the attention of the other five occupants in the dead zone: Pencil, Match, Book, Ice Cube, and Needle.

"What...? How? I just saw you guys alive!" TB protested.

Needle responded, "It's a long story."

"Wait!" Tennis Ball looked at Pencil specifically. "You! YOU tripped me and caused me to die!" He was furious.

Pencil looked as bewildered as Bubble felt now and as Tennis Ball was a moment ago. "I think you need to back up and explain what happened."

Golf Ball gaped downwards from her vantage point on the stairs at her incinerator, where Tennis Ball had just fallen into.

"Oops." Pencil had an over-exaggerated look on her face. "Sorry. But you know how clumsy that tennis ball is."

"You..." GB turned to look Pencil dead in the eye for the second time in five minutes. "That was NOT an accident! You DELIBERATELY tripped him so that he would fall into the incinerator!" she spluttered.

"Me?" Pencil gasped dramatically again. "I would NEVER! After all, he popped Bubble by bumping into her, and I would never kill Bubble!" Her eyes twinkled with malicious intent as Match sniggered behind her.

Golf Ball had never felt so livid before. She saw red and leapt at Pencil with all her might. "NGAHHH!!" she screeched.

But Pencil simply caught her and lifted her above the ground. GB kicked at air. "UNHAND ME!" she howled.

Pencil looked at Match. "What do you think, Matchy?" she asked. "Should we send her to the time-out zone?"

"Like, of course!" Match was a little giddy with the idea of finally getting back on Golf Ball for being so bossy.

As for Golf Ball herself, a little intelligence returned to her. She was still angry, but rational thinking had returned. "You can't incinerate me!" she said triumphantly. "The Golf Ball Safety Net will save me!"

"Let's test that theory." Pencil dropped over the side of the stairs.

As she plummeted towards the contained lava pool below, Golf Ball felt confident that the GBSN would save her. After all, she designed it herself-

A thought struck her, and if her face had any color, it would have drained away in an instant. The security system had been disabled a few weeks ago.

She had disabled it herself.

Fully and painfully aware of the irony, she screeched for the third time that night as the incinerator completely melted her.

"Aw yeah!" Pencil high-fived Match. "That's why you never mess with our van or our brains!"

"You said it!" The two friends headed back to the surface together and into the night, leaving the rest of the factory undisturbed.

On top of a workbench down on the factory floor, a lonely device printed words onto its screen. *1 UFO detected nearby,* it said. But nobody was around to read it.

With the usual *Ding!* that accompanied someone being recovered, Bubble slid out of the slot in the HPRC and stood up.

"Welcome back to the world of the living, Bubble," Pencil said.

"Thanks." Bubble very carefully blew some dust off of herself. "What happened?"

Match responded. "Oh, it was just, like, an accident. That clumsy Tennis Ball tripped and bumped into you, causing you to, like, pop."

Bubble had a vague memory of TB falling towards her. "Well, how did the experiment go?"

"Oh, it went fine." A sentence popped into Pencil's head and she smiled. "I guess you could say I gave them a piece of my mind."

Dang, this is the longest chapter I've written yet, even beating a chapter from Crossing Over that had almost 3000 words! I actually had to remove some filler that I wasn't very happy with to make sure this wasn't *too* long, haha

Anyway, I think my motivation has mostly returned? Or maybe it's just because I was really looking forward to writing this chapter. It's set up a lot of stuff for future "episodes." But for now - FOR NOW - GB and TB's stories have come to halt, and FreeSmart probs won't be majorly focused on for a while, besides little bits and pieces. I'm going to make sure other characters get more "screentime," especially a certain sawmeone next chapter ;)

(Was that paragraph too much of a spoiler? Probably lol)

One last thing, next chapter may take a while to write. I have the basic idea of what happens in it, but there's stuff that I need to figure out. So yeah.

...do I have anything else to say? I forgot. Oh well, if I remember I might edit it in here later.

See you in IDFB 8 :)

IDFB 8a: Rain, Rain, Go Away

March 11th

The time was approximately 1 AM, and Bomby was snoring away in his bed. In another bed a few feet away lay Naily, also peacefully sleeping. All was quiet.

But not for long, as purple sparks silently fizzled into existence around Bomby. Blissfully unaware, he was coated in a violet sheen and transported somewhere else entirely in a matter of seconds.

As the final shine of indigo light left the room, Naily sleepily opened a single eye, registered nothing but darkness, and promptly went back to sleep.

Across the city, Firey, Nickel, and Woody met the same fate as Bomby.

Three days later

Coiny rushed through the streets, doing his best to shield himself from the torrential downpour, but to no avail. His arms weren't much of a defense against the rain. Thankfully, he was not outside for long, as he quickly rushed past the Yoyle Needy and burst into the doors of the Nice Business building. However, as he entered, a puddle caused him to trip and do an epic slide across the floor, face-down. He came to a stop in front of the semicircle of objects sitting in front of a space heater.

Lollipop smiled condescendingly. "Nice entrance, coin creature," she remarked. Gelatin snickered at this.

Coiny popped up from the floor with a smile on his face. "Hey, guys!"

"Coiny! Close the doors!" Fries reprimanded. "You're letting out all the hot air!"

Doing a 180, Coiny went and quickly shut the doors. "Jeez, it is CRAZY out there," he complained.

"I know!" Pin agreed. "And not only is it pretty bad, but it's also the first rain we've seen since BFDI 3!"

"Hey, you're right!"

"Nobody needed to know that, smarty-point," Pencil grumbled. Book elbowed her.

Coiny took a proper look around the semicircle, seeing 21 others. Ice Cube was hiding from the heater behind Book, who sat squished between Ruby and Balloony. Pencil and Match sat by themselves a little ways away from Ruby. Next to Balloony was Saw, then Lollipop and Taco. A little behind Taco was where Pillow and Pie sat. On the other end of the semicircle was Fries and Puffball, as well as Gelatin and Yellow Face. Between that group and Taco's group was Teardrop, Needle, Pen, and Pin. Finally, Naily and Rocky were perched together atop the space heater itself.

As Coiny plopped himself down between Pen and Pin, Taco said, "It was really nice of you to invite us here, Fries."

Fries just nodded, still shivering a little from the soggy fries he had.

"Is that everyone, though?" Pie wondered. "I feel like we had a lot more people living in the city." Coiny noticed this at the same time.

"Well, Bubble popped earlier," Match explained. "The heavy rain was, like, too much for her frail body."

"When Lightning was freed, he just shot off into the sky to explore," Pen said. "I don't know if he ever came back."

Naily looked like she wanted to say something, but Puffball interrupted her as she opened her mouth. "Is Roboty still on top of

the Locker Of Losers?"

"HE'S PROBABLY BEEN ELECTROCUTED BY THE RAIN BY NOW," Yellow Face said.

"Bomby's gone missing!!" Naily wailed. Everyone turned to look at Naily. "He's been gone for a couple days now. I was hoping he was just exploring more of the city, but now I'm getting worried!"

Coiny put his hand to his 'chin.' "You know, I haven't seen Woody for these last few days. And I haven't seen Spongy for several months, now that I think about it..."

A few more of them confirmed not having encountered Golf Ball, Tennis Ball, or Remote for a while, and Nickel had also not been seen for three days.

"Wait, what about Firey?" Pen asked. "When did he get free of the cage hanging from the Yoyle Needy?" Needle slapped him.

"Oh, that's Leafy's fault," Pencil scoffed. "Firey's probably just hiding in a building somewhere."

"Leafy?!" several people exclaimed, turning to stare at Pencil. In the recent weeks, stories had been spread about the finale of BFDI, so most of the newer objects knew who she was now.

"I'll explain later."

"So, if we account for Bubble and Roboty being dead, and Lightning being off exploring somewhere, that's..." Saw counted on her fingers. "...eight people missing. Huh."

"Maybe we should go look for them?" Pie suggested lazily.

"That's a great idea!" Naily jumped up in excitement. "We can start to look through the buildings in the city to see if they got trapped somewhere or something! Who's with me?"

"Sounds like as good an idea as any," Pie said.

Lollipop frowned. "In *this* weather? You must be mad. I'm staying

here, where it's nice and warm."

"Well, I'm coming!" Gelatin stood up. "I'm always up for an adventure." Balloony, Puffball, Saw, Taco, and Teardrop also decided to join Naily's search party, while everyone else stayed behind.

"I think you guys are going to need umbrellas," Needle pointed out.

"Good point!" Pin agreed.

Fries pointed *(alright, alright, I'll stop with the point puns)* towards a medium-sized trunk sitting next to the front doors. "I think there's a bunch of umbrellas in there. It seems like whoever lived here before us had frequent enough rain that they gave out umbrellas to those who were exiting the building - I wonder why that changed?"

"Maybe the weather was also affected when the 'others' changed the environment with a biological virus so many years ago," Pencil wondered out loud.

Everyone looked at her. "Where did *that* come from?" Pillow asked.

A rare emotion suddenly crossed Pencil's face - confusion. "I..." She scratched the back of her 'head.' "I don't... know."

The room was quiet for a moment before Gelatin shrugged, grabbed an umbrella from the trunk, and walked out the main doors of the building. The rest of the searchers followed suit.

Coiny watched them go, the turned to the rest of the group. "Alright," he said. "Hear me out. I know it's not Halloween yet-"

"It's not even close!" Pin protested.

"-but while we're stuck in here, waiting out this ridiculous rainstorm, I say we tell each other some ghost stories."

Several people groaned. "Puh-leeze," Match complained. "Nobody's ever, like, scared of those."

"Well, I'm gonna tell one anyway." Coiny got an evil grin on his face. "It was a dark and stormy night-"

Something fell over in the back of the room, causing Match to scream in fright and leap into Pencil's arms. Everyone burst into laughter.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

A flashlight clicked on. Then another, then another, then another. Four flashlight beams flew across the room as the party of eight inspected the long-abandoned Juice Cinema building. While time had been kind to most of the buildings in Yoyle City, it definitely hadn't been kind to this one. The first floor was an absolute mess, seeing as how the ceiling had partially crumbled and spilled dust and rubble everywhere.

Balloony took a deep breath, choked on the dust, and coughed violently. "Man!" he wheezed. "Why the heck is there so much dust?"

Gelatin shrugged and moved around various piles of rubble. "It looks like a warzone in here," he commented.

His flashlight reflected against something in the dark. Curious, he directed the light back towards where it was reflected from and gasped. "Woah!"

"What is it?" Puffball's voice rang out from the entrance.

"Check it out!" He dropped his flashlight and scooped up a pile of sharp objects. "It's a bunch of forks!"

"What's so special about forks?" Pie questioned.

"Well, you can do things like this!" Gelatin hurled a fork at Pie. It stabbed her right in her center, causing her volatile blueberry filling to explode and splatter all over Puffball, Saw, and Teardrop.

"Ew!" Saw wiped the filling off herself.

"Gross!" Puffball complained. "Now I know how it feels..."

Teardrop just shook herself off like a wet dog.

"I gotta get these to my house!" Gelatin scooped up as many forks as he could carry and dashed out of the building."

"And then there were seven," Taco noted. "Guess I'll take Gelatin's flashlight."

"I don't think there's anything here." Naily sounded annoyed. "Let's try the second floor."

Balloony looked up at the ceiling nervously, seeing how cracked and full of holes it was. "Are you sure? It looks pretty unstable..."

"It'll be fine. Let's go." Naily moved up the stairs without waiting for the others to follow. They did anyway.

If anything, the second floor was worse than the first one was. The floor was only partially intact. There were pillars dotted around the room holding up the ceiling, but even with those in place, the ceiling sagged dangerously. Seeing as how the stairwell to the third floor was blocked off, Saw guessed that a few floors above them had collapsed, and the pillars in this room was the only thing holding back all the rubble. Saw suddenly felt as nervous as Balloony looked. "I gotta agree with Balloony- it doesn't seem safe up here," she admitted.

"Come on, Saw. Where's your sense of adventure? There's no fun without risk!" It was at that moment that Naily tripped and fell face-first onto the floor, punching through it and causing one of the pillars to fall through as well and crush her.

Everyone stared at the hole that Naily and the pillar made. "That seems like a little *too* much risk for me," Puffball muttered.

Suddenly, the building shook. The ceiling above them started to crack and crumble, causing little pebbles and even more dust to rain upon them. "We gotta get out of here!" Taco yelled. "RUN!"

Saw was the first down the stairs. She was halfway to the door when the third floor collapsed, causing several tons of wood and concrete to crash through the second floor and on top of her.

"Urrgggg..." Saw groaned loudly. She had a splitting headache. The funny thing was, she couldn't remember why.

Opening her eyes revealed that she was in an *extremely* dust-filled room. Well, 'room' isn't the right word - it was more of a chamber. The four walls were hewn from stone, with a wooden door set in the center of one wall. There were a couple barrels standing in the chamber, and rocks ranging from refrigerator-sized to Rocky-sized were strewn across the ground. There was also a large pile of rocks covering most of one wall. Other than that, the room was mostly bare.

Something behind Saw shifted. She whirled around, ready to go all kung-fu on whatever monster she though was sneaking up behind her, but it was just Taco. "Taco!" she cried. She rushed over and pulled her friend out of the wreckage, dusting her off.

"Hey, Saw..." Taco winced, as one side of her shell was partially crushed. "Uhh, part of your head is missing."

Raising her hand, Saw felt her splintered handle and sighed. "Looks like I'll have to replace it..."

Another rock behind Taco suddenly moved, revealing Teardrop, who was coughing from the dust. "Oh, hey Teardrop!" Saw called out. TD waved, then joined them after another coughing fit.

Taco glanced around the room. "Where even are we?"

Teardrop shrugged. "It looks like a basement," Saw theorized. "I guess all this rubble punched through the floor of the first floor and trapped us in here?"

"Are we trapped, though?" Taco looked up. "Sure, we probably can't climb out, but Puffball can fly."

Saw looked around for Puffball, but TD caught her attention. The droplet was focusing on something long and black poking out from under one of the larger rocks next to her. With effort, she lifted it up for just a second before letting it drop, but a second was enough time for Saw and Taco to see the squished bodies of Balloony and Puffball.

"I think Teardrop found Puffball," Saw said.

Taco stuck her tongue out at her. "Well, since we can't fly out, let's try this." She walked towards the wooden door that Saw had spotted earlier and opened it, revealing a long and dark hallway.

Saw picked up a flashlight and shook it. The light flickered on. "Let's hope that hallways leads us somewhere useful."

"... when the shoe woke up, his shoelaces were missing, and the doctor was never heard from again!" The room erupted into laughter at Pillow's horror story of a medical appointment gone wrong. It wasn't quite the response Pillow was expecting, but she smiled and enjoyed it nonetheless.

"That's got to be the funniest 'horror' story I've ever heard!" Pin said between giggles.

"Wait," Needle said. "That was a horror story?" Which just made everyone laugh again.

However, their laughter abruptly stopped when the ground shook. "Earthquake!" Pencil cried out. Several people dived for cover. Fries grabbed Rocky before he could fall off the space heater, then slid under the reception desk with Yellow Face. Pin, Lollipop, and Ruby joined them. Book took Ice Cube and went over to hide under a table, where Pen was already hiding. Coiny bumped into Needle as they hid underneath a different table, while Pencil and Match simply clung to each other in the middle of the floor.

Thankfully, the earthquake was short, and ended barely a moment after Pillow managed to squeeze herself in between Needle and Coiny. The room was mostly unaffected; the Nice Business building was sturdy. The worst damage was a desktop computer crashing down in front of Lollipop's face.

"These earthquakes are getting more and more frequent," Pen grumbled. "That's the sixth one we've had since February!"

"I wonder what's causing them?" Book pondered as she stood up.

"MAYBE THE MOUNTAIN'S A VOLCANO!" Yellow Face said loudly. "AND IT'S GETTING READY TO ERUPT!"

Ruby just scoffed at this. "Don't be silly! If Yoyle Mountain was a volcano, there would be a hole at the top. "We've all been up there."

"We haven't," Pen, Pillow, and Lollipop chorused.

"Whatever."

Coiny scratched his 'chin' in thought. "Hmm.. I'll be back in a bit, guys."

"Where are you going?" Needle asked him as he jogged out the front door of the building.

"To check something!"

Needle glanced over at Pin, who just shrugged.

Saw stepped in the puddle with a *splash,* accidentally sending a few droplets towards Taco. "Watch it!"

"Sorry," Saw grumbled. "Who would've guessed that there are puddles in a sewer?" For that was where the mysterious wooden door had led them - straight into a sewer.

Teardrop rolled her eyes and pushed past Saw, stepping into a second puddle, ahead of the first one and much larger. Suddenly, she sunk into it almost faster than Taco or Saw could register.

"Teardrop!" Saw cried. She tossed the flashlight to Taco and dived into the "puddle."

It was much, *much* deeper than an initial look would reveal. And extremely dark. Even with Taco shining the flashlight right through the surface, Saw could barely see Teardrop sinking lower and lower, not having moved out of surprise. Then TD started to flail around, but just as Saw reached her, she dissolved into the rest of the water, her limbs and face vanishing like they never existed.

Startled, Saw floated in place for a second, then remembered she had to breathe and quickly swam for the surface. But the water trembled as the earth around it shook, and a large chunk of rock peeled off the wall and slammed into Saw, pushing her lower and lower into the inky depths. Saw thought she could faintly hear Taco calling her name through the layers of liquid.

Saw struggled underneath the weight of the large stone, but it was no use. It had pinned her as effectively as a thumbtack would pin a piece of paper to a cork board. She was doing her best to hold her breath, but it was getting harder and harder.

Finally, she managed to wiggle out from under the rock just as it smashed into the bottom of the well. But then the rock fell straight through, and all the water - Saw included - drained though the hole and into a ginormous open space. Screaming, Saw plummeted past flashes of green, yellow, and blue until she hit the ground and promptly passed out.

A few minutes later, she woke up with yet another headache and an even more splintered handle. She shakily stood up, wiped the last of the sewer water off herself, and looked around.

Saw blinked in confusion, then rubbed her eyes to make sure she was seeing correctly. She was in some sort of huge spherical space, but that wasn't the weird part. The weird part was that the entirety of the sphere was covered in grass and trees. Some of them were growing sideways, or upside down. Floating in the center of the space was something that looked like a miniature sun. *Plants don't belong underground,* Saw thought, still trying to figure out what was going on.

A memory returned to her, one where she was talking to Golf Ball and Tennis Ball. GB had described something extremely similar to where she was now...

Then she gasped. "No way!" Saw put her hands to her head in astonishment. "I'm in an inverted planet!"

Try saying "in an inverted" five times fast lol

Uhh, I don't really have anything to say here. Stay safe, wash your hands, wear a mask, all that good stuff. Cya in the next part

IDFB 8b: Volcanic Vibrations

Saw gaped at the unique environment around her, particularly the upside-down trees and the floating mini-sun. *How does that even happen?* she thought to herself in amazement.

Something brushed against her foot. "Ahh!" Saw leapt back in surprise, causing whatever touched her to leap back as well. She looked down and saw a tiny pebble with legs and a face staring right back at her, just a little smaller than she remembered Firey Jr to be.

"Awww!" she cooed. "Aren't you cute! Is your name Pebble?"

"Nope!" it replied with a high-pitched squeak. "I'm #42!"

"Huh?" But before she could process this, another pebble poked out from behind the trunk of a tree. Then three more appeared from under a larger rock. Soon, several dozen pebbles had gathered around her, emerging from behind trees, blades of grass, or exiting tunnels bored into the sides of the inverted planet that she didn't notice before.

"Who are you?" #42 squeaked.

"Yeah, who? I wanna know!" another spoke.

"Where did you come from?" a third wondered. Several others repeated the questions, bombarding Saw with squeaks and squeals.

"Alright, alright! Calm down!" she finally said. They stopped abruptly. She felt a little nervous. "Uhh, my name is Saw. I came from above ground, on the surface." She pointed upwards. "I fell through that hole there a moment ago."

Excited murmurs swept across the crowd of pebbles. "You're from the surface?" #42 asked.

"Yeah, that's... what I just said."

"Then you must be friends with The Rock?"

More murmurs, this time turning into some sort of chant. "The Rock! The Rock! The Rock!" the pebbles repeated.

"The Rock? You mean Dwayne Johnson?" Then she had a thought. "Oh! You're talking about Rocky, aren't you?"

"The Rock! The Rock! The Rock!" the tiny stones chanted again.

"Yeah, I know him! I'm not really 'friends' with him, though..."

"What is the Rock like?" a random pebble asked.

"Is he brave?" another questioned.

"Is he strong?"

"Is he majestic?"

"Not really..." Saw muttered. "He's kind of... sick."

"Sick? As in, cool and awesome?"

Saw frowned. "No, the other kind."

Suddenly, she felt the sensation of being watched. Not by dozens of little eyes - that felt different - but by a single pair of big eyes.

She turned around and almost yelped again in surprise. The side of the inverted planet that was behind her was barren of trees, but not grass. *And it had a face.*

Now, being an object with a face herself, that wasn't what surprised her. She had even seen objects without a mouth or without eyes (Donut and Black Hole) - however, it was the sheer size of the face that had startled her. What's more, the eyes actually had whites, and not just a black pupil.

The face frowned. "What? Am I *that* scary?" it boomed.

"No, sorry." Saw breathed out. "I just wasn't expecting... someone like *you."*

"Well, I wasn't expecting someone like you to come around here, either, so I guess that makes us even." The face grinned. "Anyway, welcome to me! I'm the inverted planet that you're standing inside right now. You may call me Invy." *(A/N: to quote Lightning, "it's pronounced In-vee!")* "There used to be more inverted planets like me," Invy continued, "dotted all around the underground of Earth. But alas, I believe myself to be the last one left. At least, the last one with a consciousness."

"Wow." Saw was speechless. "That's... well, really sad, that you're the last one. But also really cool! I mean, your existence. Not the fact that you're... yeah."

Invy smiled again. "Thankfully, I have the peblets to keep me company."

"Speaking of the peblets..." Saw quickly looked around the crowd until she spotted the one that she thought talked to her first. "One of them introduced themself as... number 42?"

"That's me!" piped up the pebble that was standing next to the one Saw was looking at.

"Right, right. Are they *all* named after numbers?"

"Unfortunately, yes." Invy sighed. "They can't all be called 'Pebble' or 'Peblet,' so they decided to number themselves."

"I'm #20!" one of the pebbles called out.

"I'm #176!" another said.

"My name's #88!"

"#13, over here!"

"I'm #69!"

"Peblets, please!" Invy anxiously managed to get them to quiet down.

"Roll call already happened today!"

"Sorry," they mumbled as one.

"Wow," Saw said again. "I've never seen anything like this before. I thought only one of every object had sentience!"

Invy snorted. "Just wait until you learn about alternate universes."

"Pardon?"

"Never you mind." Invy cleared his throat. "#42, would you like to give Saw here a tour of the nearby tunnels?"

"I'd love to!" #42 smiled a big smile - well, as big as he could, considering his size - and pushed through the crowd, trying to get to the nearest tunnel. Saw nearly lost him.

One glance at the tunnels, and Saw knew she would never be able to fit, even if she lay on her side and crawled through. However, the earth rumbled slightly, and the dirt and stone on top of the tunnels parted way, allowing her to be able to traverse through if she sent down slightly. She looked at Invy, who winked. Saw *woahed* silently and followed #42 down the tunnel, with the rest of the peblets on her heels.

#42 began to explain some things as they went deeper and deeper into the earth. "I'm not sure when we gained sentience," he started. "It was only a few years ago at maximum. We all started out inside Invy, but created these tunnels to explore the earth. Some still love back there, but most of us are now dotted inside cubby holes in the tunnels." They passed several of these little homes. Saw looked in one and saw two peblets snoozing, one sitting on top of each other. It reminded her of something, but she wasn't sure what.

They entered a chamber that was just large enough for Saw to be able to stand up without crouching. It seemed to be a junction - several paths branched away from the room, and peblets were constantly entering and exiting other tunnels, glancing at Saw as they went along. Several stopped and just stared, making her blush under their gazes.

Other than her, three peblets seemed to be attracting most of the attention in the room. Two of them were arguing quite loudly, with the third one hiding behind the more annoying-sounding one. Saw leaned down. "What's going on there?" she whispered to #42.

He didn't even look over. "Oh, that's just #2, #4, and X. #2 and #4 are always arguing over something."

"X?" Saw questioned. "I thought all you guys were numbered."

"X was too, but he forgot what his number was early on, and nobody else remembered, either. So we just call him X."

"Oh."

Saw suddenly noticed that many peblets were stacked on top of one another, but only in pairs. "Hey, what's up with that?"

#42 glanced up at Saw. "Well, I'm sure you've noticed we don't have... those." He gestured to her arms with his foot. "When two peblets are stacked, the one on top uses their legs to do things like hold dirt, and move dirt, and do other stuff with dirt."

"That's cool!" Saw realized why that action was so familiar. After having hung out with Golf Ball and Tennis Ball quite a lot when she was first released from the LOL, she remembered the duo doing exactly what the peblets were doing, with GB on the top.

She felt a pang of worry. *My friends,* Saw thought, remembering all the other objects aboveground. *Will I ever be able to get back up to them?*

Jogging through the rain-soaked streets of Yoyle City, Coiny finally reached his destination - the HPRC. More specifically, the machine lodged in the glue stream next to it. He had seen Golf Ball place the seismograph there a couple of weeks ago, but didn't think much of it until now, even with multiple earthquakes. He had only remembered it because they were talking about GB earlier. Maybe it had some useful info about the recent quakes. Thankfully, while the rain was still coming down fast, he was able to actually see farther than a few

feet in front of him. He could even just see Yoyle Mountain in the distance.

Coiny stopped in front of the HPRC to catch his breath, then took a few steps over to the seismograph and looked at the screen. It was mostly gibberish to his eyes, something about the Richter scale and numbers that just looked completely random.

Most of the buttons didn't look like they'd be useful. He selected one labeled "probabilities," but the thing he was looking for wasn't on the list. Sighing in defeat, Coiny turned to go when the ground shook violently, much worse than any earthquake they've had before. He fell over and wasn't able to get back up for a solid 30 seconds. He could hear the seismograph beeping in alarm behind him.

Finally, the quaking stopped, but something had felt off about it. It was like the previous ones had a blocked nose, but this one finally managed to unblock it.

Coiny stood up and looked around. Despite the ferocity of the quake, Yoyle City seemed mostly fine. But when he glanced towards Yoyle Mountain, he gasped at what he saw. Desperately, Coiny took a step back, then sprinted as fast he could into the cluster of buildings, completely ignoring the rain. He had to warn the others.

Turns out Ruby was wrong. Yoyle Mountain didn't need a hole at the top to be a volcano.

Saw stood up and dusted herself off. "Yikes. That was the worst earthquake yet. Everyone ok?"

Most of the peblets nodded. When the earthquake it, lots of dirt and dust had been shaken from the ceiling, and *everyone* had toppled over, but the tunnel held.

"Do you know what's causing these quakes?" Saw asked #42.

He shook his head. "No, but Invy might! Let's go ask him!" #42 dashed off and Saw quickly ran after him. Even though it was a straight shot back to the inverted planet, Saw didn't trust herself to

not get lost somehow.

Unfortunately, the tunnel hadn't held everywhere, for the path back to Invy was blocked by a misfire landslide. "Darn!" #42 growled. "We'll have to go around."

That didn't seem right to Saw. "Why don't we just dig through?" she asked.

#42 looked up at her. "If we just tried to burst through an unstable section of tunnel, it might collapse even more and make the situation worse. There's a longer path that loops around back to Invy in the chamber we just left - it'll be slow, but safer. Come on!"

Once again, he dashed back the way he came, and Saw reluctantly followed.

"Truth or dare?" Pencil asked mischievously.

Fries gritted his teeth. "Truth. I'm not taking another dare from you, *O great leader Pencil."*

The group of objects who decided to stay in the Nice Business building had been playing Truth or Dare ever since Coiny left. Poor Fries had been dared (by Pencil, of course) a few minutes ago to call Pencil *O great leader* for the rest of the day. Now it was his turn again.

Pencil thought for a moment. "What's your favorite food?" she finally asked.

Now, for most people, this wouldn't be a very embarrassing question. But Fries' favorite food was a particularly controversial dish.

Fries groaned inwardly and looked at the ground. "Pineapple pizza," he muttered quietly.

"What's that?" Pencil questioned.

Fries opened his mouth, but was saved the humility of answering in a

louder voice by Coiny bursting through the front door (again). He jumped to avoid the puddle that made him slip last time, but landed awkwardly, causing him to trip and roll right into Pencil, Match, and Needle, knocking all of them over.

"Strike!" Pen cheered.

"Like, shut up, Pen Pen," Match grumbled as she helped Pencil up.

Coiny disentangled himself from the pile of limbs. "Sorry about that, guys. But I gotta tell you something!"

"Was it *really* so important that you had to barge in here and bowl several people over?" Lollipop asked snarkily.

"Please don't mention bowling," Ice Cube whimpered quietly. Nobody but Book heard her.

"Yes, actually." Coiny dusted himself off. "Yoyle Mountain IS a volcano, and it's erupting!"

"What?!" nearly the whole room chorused in disbelief.

"It's true! Come on outside and I'll show you!" Coiny rushed outside and everyone followed him. Fries and Pillow both paused at the door to grab an umbrella as to avoid becoming any soggier.

The group of 14 objects got bombarded by rain as they exited Fries' building and gaped at the mountain in the distance. A new hole had appeared at the top of the mountain, and a plethora of lava was flowing straight towards the city. People started to panic.

"Oh no!!" Ruby shrieked.

"What are we going to do??" cried Pen.

"We're all going to die!" Icy wailed.

Coiny was panicking, too - just inwardly. Glancing around quickly, he noticed that the only other person who wasn't visibly distraught (besides Rocky, of course) was Needle, although she did look concerned.

Coiny sidled up next to her. "You have a look on your face," he said. "Do you have an idea?"

"Maybe." Needle *hmmed*. "It's a bad one, though..."

"Oh, come on. It's not like anyone else has an idea."

"What if..." She paused. "What if we tried to, I don't know... redirect the flow of the river nearby, so that it blocked the lava from reaching the city?" She shrugged and gave a nervous smile.

Pillow had overheard. "Hey, that's a great idea! The only problem is, how would we redirect the flow of the river?"

"BY DIGGING, OF COURSE!" Yellow Face suggested.

"That's the spirit!" Coiny cheered, attracting the attention of the rest of the objects. He quickly relayed Needle's idea to them, and they readily agreed.

"But we'll need shovels," Pin pointed out. "Where can we get those?"

"I know!" Everyone turned to look at Fries. "When we first explored the city three years ago, I found this place that used to sell all sorts of gardening supplies - including shovels."

Match spoke up. "Normally, I don't like, like, stealing, but in this case, I guess it's, like, acceptable."

"Match is right!" Pencil wrapped her arm around the matchstick. "We gotta do whatever we can to make sure that we *don't* burn up in a horribly painful fashion."

"So it's settled, then," Book said with confidence. "We go get a bunch of shovels, dig a tunnel across the lava's path, and let the river loose."

"Yeah!" Everyone cheered and pumped their fist (if they had one). Rocky barfed into the air in celebration.

Nothing down here! Everything I have to say is at the end of the next chapter

IDFB 8c: Get Digging 2 🔄

It wasn't long before Fries found shovels for all of them, and they all met up at the northern end of the city. The lava was still a ways away, but gradually getting closer. Everyone started to dig.

"Dig, dig, dig!" Pin urged as everyone else began to shovel away dirt. "Work those tools like your life depends on it! Which it does! I'm looking at you, Ice Cube! No arms is *no* excuse!"

"But I don't know how to dig!" Icy complained. "My legs aren't very strong!"

"Looks like *someone's* been skipping leg day," Lollipop snickered.

Fries stepped in. "Ice Cube, do you want to live?"

"Yeah..."

"Then you'd better get digging! Because if you don't, that lava over there-" Fries pointed towards the mountain. "-is going to melt you!"

Reluctantly, Ice Cube tried to pick up her shovel and began to scratch away at the nearest patch of earth.

"Hey, you make a pretty good leader!" Pin complimented Fries.

"You're not doing too bad yourself," he complimented back. They high-fived.

Next to Match, a clock dinged. "Ooh! Break time!"

"Aw, yeah!" Pencil cheered. They both dropped their shovels.

"Hnngg!" Book had had enough of this. "Match! Pencil! If you two don't start digging again *right now,* you will both be demoted to bembers!"

"Aah!" the duo said simultaneously. They grabbed their shovels again and furiously started moving soil.

While their backs were turned, Book grabbed the alarm clock and punted it all the way up the mountain and into the lava. "I never liked clocks," she muttered.

Over in the TLC, Clock shuddered.

An hour later

Saw had to shield her eyes from the light of the miniature sun after being in the dark for about an hour. The inverted planet seemed mostly fine, except for the fact that Invy was trying to calm down a crowd of panicking peblets.

He spotted them. "Oh, hello, Saw and #42."

Saw waved and jogged over to his face, doing her best to not step on any peblets on the way. "Do you know what's causing these earthquakes?" she asked.

Invy gave the impression of shaking his head. "While I can control the earth in small amounts for a radius of a few miles, I do not know what has been happening lately. Yoyleland has never had a single earthquake until a few months ago."

Suddenly, Saw felt something land on her head and sizzle. She stepped back and looked up and, to her surprise, saw a thin but steady stream of lava flowing down from the hole that she fell through earlier. "What the heck?!"

Invy gasped as the stream quickly grew larger, covering Saw's feet in a matter of seconds. The peblets in the room started to scream and flee down the nearest tunnels as the unluckier ones melted in the ever-growing pool of lava. Saw just watched, dumbstruck, as lava pushed through more cracks in the walls and ceiling.

"I-Invy!" she finally cried. "What's going on? Can't you control the earth? Why aren't you closing the cracks?"

"What do you think I've been trying to do?" Invy spat back.

Saw looked closer and saw various cracks closing, but there were so many opening that it wasn't doing anything. "We have to get the peblets out of here! We have to..."

Saw drifted off as she turned to look at Invy's face. He looked absolutely furious - and he was directing the glare at her. *"You* did this," he growled.

"W-what?"

"YOU did this!" His roar shook the chamber. "YOU caused that hole in the ceiling! You started the lava flow! If you weren't here, this wouldn't be happening!"

"What?! No!!" Saw defended. "I didn't-"

"Save it," he snapped. He closed his eyes for a moment, concentrating, then grunted. "It appears that I am doomed, as are the peblets. But I think I know a way to get you back..."

The rain splattered against Coiny as he climbed out of the ditch and took a step back to appreciate everyone's handiwork. They had created a decently deep mini-canyon across the line of where the lava was going to engulf the city. Which was not a small feat, seeing how large the city is.

He suddenly noticed how close the lava was. "Everybody out!" he shouted. "The lava's almost here!"

A couple yells of surprise came from the pit, but all 12 objects managed to clamber out of the lava's path. Needle began sprinting to the east, where the ditch connected with the river. Rocky was waiting over there, ready to remove the barrier that separated their hole with the rest of the water. Turns out, Rocky had been the most help at creating the line of defense by simply eating most of the dirt.

Coiny turned back to face the lava flow. He could feel the heat on his face now. Ice Cube, Book, and a couple other of the more heat-

sensitive objects were forced to step back in order to avoid catching fire (or melting).

The first of the lava began to drip into their hole. *Please work, please work, please work,* Coiny prayed.

Then, the sound of gushing water could be heard. Twelve 'heads' looked over to the east and saw water rapidly closing in on them, neatly filling up the newly made riverbed. Wherever water and lava touched, stone was formed. Soon, a small stone wall seemed to be building itself from nowhere.

"Yaaaaaaay!" several people cheered. Coiny sighed in relief.

"High five!" Pen shouted. Several people high-fived him at once, causing him to whimper in pain and rub his hand.

"LOOK!" Yellow Face shouted. The stone that was forming was filling up the ditch, pushing the water back and forcing it to flow into the city instead. The lava, meanwhile, managed to just flow over the short stone wall and continue on towards the objects.

"Noooooooo!!" everyone screamed.

"What do we do??" Ruby asked.

Coiny thought hard, but Pin got an idea first. "Listen up!" she shouted, grabbing everyone's attention. "We may have just lost the city. But our priority now should be to protect the HPRC! It's our only recovery center. If we can find a way to get it out of the path of lava, then we can live! We'll just have to find somewhere else to do so."

"Good idea." Coiny nodded. "Everyone, let's go!"

He took a single step forward before the ground quivered beneath his feet.

"I can sense that there are some people in danger," Invy continued. "Through the earth, I can feel lava creeping towards their panicked footsteps."

Saw gasped. "My friends!"

"That's what I thought." Invy smiled maniacally. "Seems as if they are about to perish, too."

"There's got to be something you can do!" Saw was frantic.

Invy simply said, "No."

"But they're innocent!" Saw cried. "And I didn't even do anything - it was the earthquake's fault! You can't possibly blame me for a natural disaster!"

"Invy! Listen!" a small voice squeaked. Saw turned to see #42 perched atop the boulder that had started this whole mess. He leapt of off it just as the lava level covered it completely, and landed on top of Saw. "Saw and I were talking for the last hour, while we were trying to get back to you. She's just not like that! She would never let hundreds of peblets die for no reason!"

Invy's frown lessened slightly. Then Saw remembered something. "I can save the peblets!" she shouted.

"You can?!" Invy and #42 exclaimed simultaneously.

"Up on the surface, there's a machine that can recover dead objects. I can use that to bring the peblets back to life. But if it gets destroyed by the lava, then there's no coming back!"

At this point, the lava was high enough that Saw was beginning to float slightly. She could only imagine how many peblets had died now due to lava-filled tunnels.

Invy's angry expression dissolved, into one of hope. "You... you can truly bring them back? All of them?"

"I can try," Saw replied with determination. "But you have to stop the lava that's about to kill my friends."

Invy hesitated, but only for a moment. He screwed his eyes shut, then concentrated hard. Harder than ever before. The inverted planet knew he could move earth around in small amounts, but he had

never tried something of this magnitude before. The strain would likely kill him, but he would succumb to the lava anyway - if he could allow the peblets to be saved, then it would be a worthy sacrifice.

Saw floated in the lava for a moment, unsure of what to do. Then Invy opened his eyes and smiled. "It is done," he said. Then he breathed out one last time, and the last of the sentient inverted planets died.

"Another earthquake?" Fries complained as the shaking ground knocked several people off their feet. "You've got to be kidding!"

Coiny wobbled, then fell flat on his face. He looked up to see a large crack forming in front of him. As he scooted back as fast as he could, the crack grew larger and larger until it was several feet wide. Then it began to extend across the base of the mountain/volcano, running parallel to the ditch that Coiny and the others had recently finished. Glancing down into the pit, the copper coin couldn't see the bottom - only darkness.

The ground stopped rumbling. The lava began to creep into the pit, but the sheer size of the gap stopped it from going any closer to the city. The objects watched as the molten rock fell into a seemingly bottomless pit.

"Welp," Pencil said after a moment of silence. "That takes care of that, I guess. Let's get out of this rain."

Several people murmured in agreement and began to sprint back to Fries' building. Coiny almost followed them, then stopped. There was something he wanted to check on. He slipped away from the rest of the group.

A few minutes of jogging through the rain brought him to an unassuming building. Coiny opened the door to the basement he and Firey had found over three years ago and stepped inside, climbing down the steps. He glanced around the main room. The cots were the same, and there were a few scorch marks on the walls, but no Firey.

Coiny sighed and decided to just head back.

Saw shed a single tear for Invy's sacrifice before moving on to the next priority. "Alright, #42, hold on to my handle!"

"What handle?" #42 asked.

Saw felt her head and realized that the lava had destroyed the last of her handle. "Uh, there should be two little holes on my head," she improvised. "Try looping your legs through one of those." #42 obliged.

The cutting tool swam through the lava over to the nearest tree and climbed on. The lava had nearly filled half of the inverted planet - Invy's mouth was already covered by the broiling mass of molten rock. Using the sideways forest to her advantage, Saw used the trees that hadn't already been burned like a ladder, getting closer and closer to the hole at the top of the planet with every step.

She was nearly there when #42 shouted, "Look!" She paused to glance at the miniature sun floating in the center of the chamber, which the lava had just reached. The mini-sun was sparking and vibrating dangerously. "Uh oh..." Saw muttered.

The sun shattered, and everything froze, including Saw and #42. Then they began to float, as did some of the lava. Gravity seemed to have stopped.

"Woah!" Saw flailed around, losing control for a second before bumping into the top of the inverted planet. She twisted and managed to use the grass to pull herself towards the space in the roof. Just as she got there, a blob of lava encompassed her completely, causing #42 to melt. "#42!" she shouted, but he was already dead.

Grimacing, she pushed herself through the lava and floated through the long tunnel that led up to the sewers above. She exited the hole, but as she bumped against the ceiling, gravity took hold again.

"Ahh!" She managed to grab the ledge of the hole before she

plummeted back into the inverted planet below. Grunting, Saw pulled herself up past the lip of the hole and lay down on the floor of the sewer floor, panting heavily. She sat there for a full minute before sitting up and immediately vomiting up a gallon of lava.

Saw smacked her lips. "Uhg. Spicy, yet disgusting."

About 20 minutes later, Saw had managed to find her way out of the sewers and back to the other objects. She slammed open the doors to the Nice Business building, sopping wet with rain, trudged to the space heater everyone else was circled around, and collapsed to the floor, letting out a huge groan as she did so.

"Hello, Saw," Lollipop greeted. "Look's like you've been through some rough times recently."

Saw just groaned again, then sat up and noticed that the entire search party had been revived. Balloony, Naily, Pie, Puffball, and Teardrop were all there, as well as Taco and Gelatin. However, Puffball no longer had her stolen legs. "Oh hey guys! When'd you get revived?"

"I thought you drowned!" Taco went over to quickly hug Saw. "I managed to make it out of the sewers and revive the others. We managed to convince Naily to not do any more searching today, after what happened."

Naily grumbled an apology.

"But what about you? "You obviously didn't drown," Taco asked. She studied the lack of Saw's handle. "What was down there?"

"You guys are not going to believe this!" Saw replied excitedly. "There was this-"

She heard the creak of the doors open behind her and stopped. Everyone looked to see three newcomers standing in the entrance to the building - Fanny, Tree, and what looked like the corpse of Robot Flower (who was being dragged along by Tree). RF looked like she had been short-circuited by the rain.

"Hi, everyone," Tree said. "Have we missed anything?"

The rain had stopped. It was night now, and the waning gibbous moon was casting a nice, white light over the saw hastily cranking a handle on some square device stuck in a river of glue.

Ding! The telltale bell of the Hand-Powered Recovery Center signaled the recovery of an object. A tiny pebble popped out of the slot in the machine.

"#42!!" Saw cried in relief. She grabbed the pebble and hugged him close to her torso. She honestly wasn't sure if recovering any of the pebbles would have been possible.

"Saw!" #42 squeaked. He tried to hug her back with his legs. Saw set him down and he looked around in wonder. "Where *are* we?"

"We're in Yoyleland," Saw replied. "This is the place that's been sitting above Invy for so long!"

"Wow! It's so... BIG!" #42 was turning in circles, *oohing* and *ahhing* at anything he didn't recognize.

Saw chuckled. "Just wait until it's day! But I suppose I should recover all the other peblets first." She paused. "Uh, how many peblets *are* there, exactly?"

"Oh, around eight hundred or so," #42 replied casually.

"Eight-! Wow." Saw sighed and looked at the HPRC. "I suppose I should get started, then..."

5000 WORDS??? HOOOOOOOOOOOLY SHHHHHHHHHHHHHeets of paper I was NOT expecting to write that many words. I actually decided to split this chapter into 2 parts cause it was so bulky

I've been looking forward to writing this chapter for a while - the general idea of someone finding some underground civilization and then accidentally destroying it had been in the back of my mind for FOREVER or something, and I'm glad I finally got it out

Fun fact: the moon phase on March 14th, 2017, was *actually* a waning gibbous!

also I haven't proofread this yet (so sue me, it's 5k words!) but I plan to get around to it eventually lol

That's about it for today! Stay safe, and as always...

See you in IDFB 9 :)

IDFB 9a: Don't call me that! 💬

April 4th

A mysterious green pentagon-shaped figure struggled to the summit of Yoyle Mountain. (At least, they made it to the base of the giant pole that led to the *real* summit.) Stopping to catch their breath, they leaned on the pole with one hand and pulled out their map with the other.

"Hmm," they hummed. "This should be the right place." They lowered their map to see a large city spread out across the land below the mountain - countless buildings and houses overtaking the purple-stained grass like a plague. "Certainly looks like it."

Taking a quick glance at the out-of-place mining equipment on top of the mountain, they rolled up their map and mentally prepared themself for the trip down to the city. It was time to visit an old friend.

"...so anyway, that's why Needle doesn't like being called Needy," Pin finished explaining.

"Huh." Coiny scratched his 'chin.' "I never knew. That's so strange!"

"That does seem a bit odd," Tree agreed.

Pin nodded. "I know, right? It doesn't really make sense, but what can you do?"

"Maybe we should stop calling her Needy," Puffball suggested as she floated by. Rocky, who was sitting on her head, went "Mm-hm!" in agreement.

"Only if I get to call you Puffy instead." Coiny shot finger guns at her.

"Don't call me that!"

Their walking eventually brought them into view of the Yoyle Needy, coincidentally. The group spotted Fries digging away at his garden, which had long since been repaired after Firey's cage crashed into it. Several young sprouts had, well, sprouted recently.

"Hey, Fries!" Puffball called over. "We're going to see who's gonna be released from the LOL next. You coming?"

"Not this time, sorry," Fries said, then hiccupped. "I'm getting really tired of these hiccups, so I want to grow TB's new grotatoes as soon as I can."

Coiny shrugged. "Suit yourself, tater tots."

"Don't call me that!"

After an indeterminate amount of time, as the objects seemed to be able to move across the large city in inexplicably varying speeds *(totally not something that the author couldn't be bothered to be accurate with haha)*, they reached the Locker Of Losers. Not that many people were there this time - half the alliance was, as well as Roboty, who had gotten recovered after the rain a few weeks ago and instantly reclaimed his spot on top of the LOL. Yellow Face, Balloony, and Robot Flower were just standing around, while Pen was repeatedly bouncing a ball against the wall and catching it.

"Wazzup, Ballpoint Brain?" Coiny asked Pen. Tree mentally filed away that nickname for later use.

"Don't call me that. But in response to your question, well, not much," Pen replied, sounding bored. He bounced his ball again, catching it flawlessly. "Just hoping that Eraser, Blocky, or Snowball comes back."

"Same here."

"I'm just glad that I don't have to deal with Clock's annoying boredom anymore," Robot Flower complained.

Pin looked at the sun, then glanced at the three X's they had marked the ground with a while back - the spots where the three freed objects appeared. Then she noticed that something about the wall teleporter was off. Nudging Coiny, she asked, "Hey, does the wall teleporter look different to you?"

Coiny studied it. "Yeah, I think it's in the wrong spot-"

He was cut off by three objects materializing in midair and falling to the ground. However, they landed a couple of feet *away* from the X's.

Pin *hmmed.* "Looks like the earthquake slid the wall teleporter across the ground. Guess I'll have to put it back."

She was already walking towards the teleporter when she registered who one of the new objects was. "Donut!" she exclaimed. "Uh, welcome back, I guess."

"Thanks. I wanted to- woah, you're purple! Anyway, I wanted to apologize."

Pin was intrigued. "Why?"

He sighed. "Well, I acted pretty rude in BFDIA 1 and 2, but I realized that I shouldn't act that way to people. So, sorry."

"Oh, that's ok! I wasn't exactly the best person back then, either, so I know the feeling. Apology accepted."

Donut smiled with his hole mouth and walked off towards Coiny. "Hi, Donut!" Coiny waved. "Looks like all the original WOAH Bunch members are back together!"

Donut groaned. "Still not really fond of that name..."

"Oh, great," Robot Flower complained again. "Clock's back."

Clock stood up and bumped into Marker, who had also been freed. "Look, mechanical aphid," Clock said. He was still sporting a crack in his face from the last time RF messed with him. "It's a big city. Let's just stay out of each other's ways, alright?"

"Only if you don't call me that."

What is it with all the nicknames today? Pin wondered. While most of the other objects also drifted away in their own little groups, she stayed behind to quickly move the wall teleporter back to where it was supposed to be. Luckily, it wasn't heavy, and it was resting on a tripod, so it was easy to shift the teleporter somewhere else.

Pin put her hands on her 'hips.' "There we go!"

"HELLO, PIN!"

The thumbtack turned to see Yellow Face behind her. "Oh, hello, Yellow Face! What's up?"

"REMEMBER A FEW MONTHS AGO, WHEN YOU ASKED IF YOU COULD SEE MY WAREHOUSE?"

"Yeah..."

"WELL, I'M ABOUT TO GO THERE NOW! I'M ALL READY TO RESTOCK AND EVERYTHING!" He gestured with his face towards three bulky bags that were leaning against one side of the LOL, which Pin somehow hadn't noticed before. "DO YOU STILL WANNA COME?"

"Ooh! Yeah!" Pin cheered.

Balloony and Clock, the only others still there, were chatting nearby and overheard. "A warehouse?" Balloony asked. "Sounds interesting. How many products does it have?"

"OVER A MILLION!"

"A million??" Clock gasped.

"YEAH! FEEL FREE TO COME ALONG! IN FACT, IF YOU COME WITH ME AND HELP ME RESTOCK-" He gestured again with his face towards the bags. "-YOU CAN EACH TAKE ANY TWO ITEMS FROM THERE FOR FREE!"

"Count me in!" Balloony and Clock chorused.

"GREAT!"

"Just out of curiosity, how far away is your warehouse?" Pin wondered.

"OH, SEVERAL THOUSAND MILES OR SO."

"Several thousand?" Clock exclaimed. "But it would take months of walking to get there!"

"NOT WITH THE METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION I'M THINKING OF!" Yellow Face smiled knowingly. "BRING OVER THE BAGS AND I'LL SHOW YOU."

Pin obliged, taking one bag for herself and giving one each to Balloony and Yellow Face. "HERE WE GO!" YF said. He pulled out a button and pressed it with his face. The four objects vanished with a *vwoop!*

(cue IDFB intro lol)

Ruby strolled away from the LOL with Bubble and Ice Cube, cheerfully humming *Two Trucks* as she did so.

"So..." Bubble tried to start a conversation. "What did you guys think of the new objects?"

Ruby shrugged. "Donut seems cool, I guess." Ice Cube just stayed silent, so the conversation quickly stopped.

When Ruby hit the chorus, she jumped up and landed on her hands, doing a cartwheel around the corner of the nearest building. She bumped into someone right away. "Oof!" The gemstone fell over on her head.

"Ow..." the person she bumped into groaned, then gasped. "Ruby! I found you!"

They hugged Ruby fiercely, causing her to squirm. "Hey, let go!" The new object dropped her, allowing Ruby to finally get a look at them.

She gasped even more loudly then they did a moment ago. "Emerald??"

Emerald gave a huge grin. "Hi, sister."

This time, Ruby was the one hugging her. "It's so good to see you, Emmy! Wait." She removed her arms. "Why are you here? And how'd you find me?"

"Don't call me that," the green gemstone groaned. "You know how I hate being called Emmy."

"Sorry."

"Well, ever since you left to join BFDIA, I've been watching the show," Emerald explained. "Then it just stopped after episode 5e, so I stopped paying attention after a while. But eventually, I learned about IDFB, and decided to come visit you!" She paused. "Why *did* it stop, anyway?"

Ruby shrugged. "None of us really know. Firey's Speaker Box left for the old competing grounds, brought back the Locker of Losers, did Cake At Stake, then left again for something else he had left behind. Never returned."

"Huh."

Bubble and Ice Cube rounded the corner and did a double take. "Ruby, who's this?" Bubble asked nervously.

"Guys, this is my sibling Emerald," Ruby said. "Emerald, this is-"

"I know who they are," she interrupted. She suddenly sounded a lot more excited. "You guys are Bubble and Icy, right?"

They nodded.

Emerald pumped her fist in the air. "Cool! I've always wanted to meet contestants from BFDI!" She looked over at Ruby. "Well, ones that I didn't already know. Bubble, can I...?" She extended her pointer finger in her direction.

Bubble backed away. "Please don't."

"But I've always wanted to!"

"Well, *I* don't want you to-"

Too late, Bubble thought grumpily to herself the moment she realized she was in the dead zone again.

Vwoop! Four objects materialized inside a large building, filled to the brim with shelves upon shelves, each of which were filled with countless boxes.

"WELCOME TO MY WAREHOUSE!" Yellow Face presented, being a little melodramatic.

"Wow." Clock was speechless. "This place is HUGE!"

"It probably feels much bigger than it actually is for you, seeing as how you've been in the LOL for several years. But it's still pretty big," Pin admitted.

"TICK-TOCK BOY, SINCE YOU DON'T HAVE HANDS, YOU CAN GO LOOK FOR YOUR ITEMS NOW," Yellow Face said.

"Don't call me that."

"PIN AND BALLOONY, ONCE WE GET THE ITEMS IN THESE BAGS ONTO THEIR RESPECTIVE SHELVES, YOU CAN EXPLORE TOO."

"Awesome!" said Balloony. Clock wandered off to the right side of the store, while the others went to the left.

The first shelf they reached had several boxes of forks, spoons, and knives, as well as a few other things. "WHEN MY BAG IS EMPTY, PASS ME ANOTHER. WE'LL GO ALONG THE SHELVES UNTIL THEY'RE ALL EMPTY." He opened the first bag, pulled out a pile of assorted utensils, and began to sort them into the correct boxes.

They went along like that for several shelves. Yellow Face had quite a variety of items - lollipops, gloves, *spikey* gloves, buckets, bubble blowers, bubble *transformers,* gumballs, paper slips, headphones, earmuffs, bumper stickers, non-slip shoes so ha, 'niceness level detectors,' a 12-inch titanium lock cutter, several large bags full of bug larvae, and countless other items.

A particularly pink little container of glitter caught Pin's eye, and she pulled it out of her bag. "Ooh! What's this?" She inspected it.

"EMULSIFIED MAGIC YOYLE DUST!" Yellow Face replied. "I EXTRACTED IT FROM THE PEAK OF YOYLE MOUNTAIN. IT TOOK SEVERAL MONTHS AND TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF DIGGING EQUIPMENT TO GET THAT MUCH, BUT I THINK IT'LL SELL FOR QUITE A LOT!"

"Cool." She placed it on the second-lowest rack. Then something occurred to her and she froze. "Yellow Face," Pin said slowly. "When exactly did you start digging for the dust?"

YF thought for a moment as Balloony struggled to lift a cardboard box behind him. "RIGHT AT THE END OF JANUARY, I THINK."

"And you said you dug at the peak of Yoyle Mountain."

"YES."

Pin crossed her arms. "The one that turned out to be a volcano, the eruption of which was foreshadowed by various earthquakes that began around February."

Yellow Face suddenly paled significantly. "Err..."

"Did you happen to *check,"* Pin staccatoed, still speaking slowly, "if the mountain was *safe enough* to dig in beforehand?"

"Eheh... oops?" Yellow Face smiled nervously.

Pin facepalmed. "Oh my pin factory..."

In the background, Balloony managed to place the heavy box he was holding on a shelf next to a bubble blowing kit. "Finally!" he

complained. "What was even *in* that box? Bricks?"

"AN INFINITE MONEY GENERATOR!"

"Say what now?"

"Hey, Yellow Face?" Balloony, Pin, and YF turned to see Clock behind them. He was balancing a clock repair kit and a pack of extra-large batteries on top of his head. "There's this weird prison cell thingy in the back corner of your warehouse. Are the bars on it supposed to be all twisted and bent in a weird way?"

"Oh no." Yellow Face dropped his half-empty bag and bounded through the aisles. The others hurried to follow him, and found him staring at a cage that was very clearly broken. "He's gotten out."

"Who?" Pin asked. She had never seen Yellow Face this serious before.

"Purple face."

YF paused for dramatic effect. "Is that some sort of insult?" Pin asked after a moment, feeling self-conscious about her still relatively new coloring. "Because if so, then don't call me that."

Balloony just smacked his forehead.

haha more filler

sorry what? filler? shhhhhh you heard nothing

IDFB 9b: Tours, Traps, and Twinkles in the Void ✧

"So who *is* Purple Face?" Balloony questioned. "I'm assuming he's your counterpart because you're, you know, *Yellow* Face. But what is he like?"

Yellow Face grew dark. "Purple Face is not just my counterpart. He is the pure embodiment of evil. A malignant form of hate, sent here years ago by the dark gods to destroy all of objectkind as we know it."

A long pause and an uneasy silence settled over the group. "Really?" Pin finally asked.

Yellow Face suddenly reverted back to his old, cheerful self. "NO," he admitted. "BUT HE *IS* PRETTY ANNOYING."

"Ohhhhh." The others nodded as if they understood perfectly.

Yellow Face pulled out another button and pressed it quickly. "THERE," he said, stashing the button away. "THAT SHOULD HOLD HIM FOR A WHILE."

"What did you do?" Clock asked.

"WELL, HE'S NOT ON THIS FLOOR," YF explained. "SO I JUST LOCKED THE DOORWAY THAT LEADS TO THE SECOND FLOOR."

"And what do *we* do?"

"CLEARLY, MY PREVIOUS PRISON DID NOT WORK." Yellow Face inspected the bent and torn metal bars of the cage Purple Face had supposedly escaped from, then turned towards the others. "SO YOU GUYS CAN HELP ME SET A NEW TRAP FOR HIM!"

"So where's all of our other siblings?" Ruby asked Emerald as they climbed the steps of the Yoyle Needy. Ice Cube was trailing behind them.

"Most of them are doing their own thing. I was hanging with Diamond, Coral, and Poo before I came to visit you. I haven't heard from a couple of them in a while, though..."

"Who?"

"I think they were Amethyst, Garnet, Jasper, Opal, Peridot, Sapphire, and Topaz."

"Huh." Ruby counted on her fingers. "Seven gems missing. I hope they're all right."

"Me too."

Ice Cube spoke up. "Is there an ice gem?"

"Nahhh," Ruby replied. "But there's Aquamarine! Aqua means water, right?"

Before Emerald could respond, she emerged from the dark stairwell into the bright sunlight. "Ahh!" She covered her eyes, momentarily blinded.

"Ruby! What the Spongy is going on here?" a loud, brash voice hollered. "Who is this, and why did you bring them here to discover our alliance secrets?"

"First of all, Pencil," Ruby said, almost sounding like she was scolding her, "the only alliance 'secret' is that we've been stashing gumdrops up here. Second, this is my sister, Emerald! I brought her up here for the view."

Emerald's eyes cleared, and she saw a pencil looming over her, glaring, with a matchstick behind them. A book suddenly pushed past them and stuck out their hand. "Hiya," she said. "Sorry about that. I'm Book, and this is Pencil and Match."

Match gave out a little wave. "Like, hi."

Emerald accepted the handshake and pulled herself up past the top step, out onto the balcony. Her jaw dropped. "Woah." Spread out below them was the full majesty of the no longer long-lost Yoyle City. "This view is incredible!" she gushed. "I mean, I saw the city from the top of the mountain, but it looked so *small* from up there. This place is HUGE!"

"I know, right??" Ruby said excitedly. "We've been here for three and a half years, and we haven't even really explored it all yet! Just wait until you see the Science Museum. It's got so many cool gadgets and-"

"Ruby," Pencil huffed. "Have you been going to the Science Museum against the alliance's orders?"

"Alliance?" Emerald wondered. Then she remembered. "Oh yeah, you guys are in an alliance! I forgot how cool that is!"

"Eh..." Book waggled her hand. "It's so-so sometimes."

Ruby joined the green gem by the railing, and they stared out into the cluster of buildings together. Finally, Ruby broke the silence. "Wanna go see more?"

"Do I?" Emerald's eyes gleamed. "Of course! I've never seen any city like this before! But, uh, there's a lot of stairs. Is there a faster way down?"

"Well, yes, but it involves just dropping and shattering at the bottom of the building."

Emerald sighed. "Stairs it is, then."

The sudden banging at the top of the stairwell made Balloony flinch. He was hiding behind a large shelf that housed rolls of wrapping paper, toilet paper, and various other types of paper. Yellow Face had made a new box of metal that would hopefully hold Purple Face this time. The plan? Balloony, Pin, and Clock would lure Purple Face from the second floor over to an X on the ground, near the back of

the warehouse, where Yellow Face would then drop the box on top of Purple Face and catch him.

"Ready?" YF called out.

"Ready!" the others replied from various points around the building. Yellow Face whipped out the button he had used earlier and pressed it, causing the doors to the second floor to slide open. From it emerged... something.

Balloony was disgusted. Sure, Yellow Face looked ok enough, but Purple Face? The only difference was the color, yet something about it just felt *wrong.* Maybe he was just too used to yellow.

"Hey! Purple Boy! Over here!" Balloony emerged from behind his hiding spot and waved his arms.

Purple Face turned towards him and smiled evilly. "I'M ABOUT TO EAT YOU!"

"Oh no!" *Yellow Face didn't mention anything about that!* Balloony thought. Doing a 180, he quickly sped away from Purple Face as the malignant blotch of color began the chase. Not quite sticking to the pre-planned pathway, the balloon raced around various shelves in an attempt to escape the horrid Face of Purple, leaving behind a dotted line path in a very *Family Circus*-esque way.

He managed to escape Purple Face's line of sight for a split second and used that to dive behind a large box, panting heavily.

"Hey!" Clock shouted, poking out from his own hiding spot nearby. "Purpley Head! Over here!"

"Don't call me that!" Purple Face yelled back. Pin, who was feeling insulted and had just popped out of her *own* hiding spot, yelled the same thing. Looking back, Purple Face realized that Pin was right behind him and promptly pushed the shelf between them onto her.

"Ack!" Pin's hands automatically shot out, and she managed to catch the shelf at a 45 degree angle. Various objects tumbled out from the racks and were dumped on top of her, including a can of paint that Yellow Face had put there earlier. It opened midair and doused her

completely in red paint.

Pin sighed. "I guess I was getting tired of being purple, anyway."

Meanwhile, Purple Face was sprinting after Clock when Balloony tackled him. "Gotcha!" he grunted. "Help me pin this guy down!" Clock reversed track and leapt on top of Purple Face, dog-pile style.

"Oh, haha. Very punny," Pin said as she emerged from behind the fallen shelf and ran over to help. Even with the three of them holding Purple Face down, he was still struggling. And almost winning.

"He's too strong!" Pin shouted.

"Wait! I have an idea!" Clock untangled himself from the pile and sat down next to Purple Face, so that the colored head was directly between him and the large X on the ground near the back of the warehouse. He then allowed his 'hands' to start moving forward.

Tick. Tick. Tick. Boom! The natural power of Clock's second hand propelled Purple Face out of Balloony and Pin's grip and all the way over the warehouse. PF smashed into the wall and lay stunned on top of the X. Suddenly, a large metal box labelled *Don't open, purple inside* crashed down on top of Purple Face, trapping him.

"Yay! We did it!" Pin cheered, high-fiving Balloony and hugging Clock.

"GREAT JOB, GUYS!" Yellow Face emerged from behind a curtain, where he had untied the rope that allowed the prison box to drop on top of Purple Face.

The box shuddered, making everyone jump. "Are you sure that can hold him?" Clock asked nervously. "I mean, the previous cage you had him in got kinda wrecked..."

"OH, DON'T WORRY! THAT BOX CAN HOLD HIM FOR AT *LEAST*..." Yellow Face quickly ran some calculations. "1236 DAYS!"

"That's an oddly specific number, but alright," muttered Clock.

"ANYWAY, BALLOONY AND PIN, DON'T FORGET THAT YOU HAVE

A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO GET TWO FREE ITEMS FROM HERE BEFORE WE LEAVE!"

"Ooh, thanks for the reminder!" Pin quickly dashed off to find something she might like. There was a particular cookbook she had been eyeing for a while.

Balloony caught up to her. "Hey, why do you think we managed to get Purple Face so early in the day?" he wondered out loud. "I was totally expecting his capture to be the climax of this chapter."

Pin just shrugged.

Bubble floated through the dead zone, having already chatted with the others who were there. Golf Ball and Tennis Ball had now been added to the gang, but GB kept her distance from Pencil and Match.

The soapy sphere kept her eyes closed and wished that someone would recover her. It usually took a while, but other than when Pencil and the others disappeared for a month, she was generally recovered in a few hours at most.

But something about the dead zone just felt off to her. Every time she talked to one of the other objects, they would say a word or two that was completely out of context of the rest of their sentence. Not to mention that the aforementioned words were in a strange, distorted voice. But nobody else seemed to notice. And she was sure that more of the twinkles in the void than usual were colored various shades of red...

An image suddenly flickered in her mind, startling her. "Ah!" But it was gone long before she could process what it was.

Needle noticed. "Bubble? Are you ok?"

"Yeah..." Bubble sighed. "I'm fine. Just... thought I saw something."

Emerald and Ruby strolled into the Science museum without having

to even open the door, as Ruby left it open last time she was here. Emerald waved her hand in front of her face. "Ehg, this place is cool and all, but the IDFB episodes can't really convey the smell here."

"I don't smell anything!"

"That's because you *lost* your sense of smell." Emerald paused. "You know what's weird? Lots of people have been visiting this museum recently. First Golf Ball and Tennis Ball, then your alliance, then just you and Bubble, then just you and Book... come to think of it, *you've* been the one visiting this place a lot."

"Well, as you said, it's a cool place!"

Something red flashed at the back of the museum for a split second, scaring Emerald and causing her to leap into Ruby's arms. "Ah! It's Evil Leafy!"

"Don't be silly!" Ruby unceremoniously dropped Emerald on the floor. "Evil Leafy's been dead for almost 4 years now."

"B-but then, w-what was that?" Emerald stuttered.

The red gemstone walked over to where Evil Leafy had popped up and opened a panel on the wall, revealing a bunch of wires and controls. "It's not actually Evil Leafy. It's just a projection!"

"Really?"

"Yeah! I discovered it one day while Bubble was on the second floor. It flickers on whenever someone enters this room, but only for a second." Ruby yanked out several of the wires at once, powering down the whole thing. "Looks like someone had a sense of humor."

"Phew." Emerald was relieved. After seeing things that Evil Leafy had done in BFDIA, she was terrified of the prospect of actually meeting her. "Can we go check out the other floors? I saw that you and Book explored some of it in IDFB 7, but they just kinda flashed by, like a montage."

"Of course!" Ruby led Emerald up the stairs. Unbeknownst to either gem, however, Ruby had also deactivated the cameras when she

pulled those wires out of the wall.

Just as the sun was about to set, Yellow Face, Pin, Balloony, and Clock popped into existence outside the Locker Of Losers with no warning, startling Roboty and making him almost fall over. ".... . -.-- -.-.-- / -.. --- -. .----. - / -.. --- / - .... .- - -.-.-" he beeped.

"Sorry, Roboty," Pin apologized. She made sure her cookbook was tucked under her arm, then went off in search of Fries. She only had one item because Yellow Face counted the accidentally-used bucket of red paint as the other.

Clock followed her, balancing his spare batteries and clock repair kit in search of a willing object with arms. Balloony waved at Yellow Face before heading off, towing along an air pump and a small green book. Yellow Face watched them go, then hopped away from the LOL himself, humming a little tune as he went.

After a bit of walking, Pin came across Needle. "Hey, Needy, check this out!" She raised her cookbook to show Needle.

As expected, Needle whipped around her arm to slap Pin. "DON'T-" she started to say, but this time, the thumbtack grabbed Needle's arm mid-slap. "If I hear the words 'don't call me that' one more time," Pin growled, "I'm going to slap *you."*

Needle wisely put her arm next to her side.

look ending chapters is hard alright

anyway yeah, this chapter was fun to write, I expected the whole Purple Face thing to last a little longer but still

shameless plug time **I got a new book, it'd be appreciated if you went to check it out!**

See you in IDFB 10 :)

IDFB 10: Dungeons & Daggers, part 1 🗡

(A/N: rather than have "IDFB 10a" and "IDFB 10b" for this 'episode,' I chose to use "part 1," "part 2," and "part 3" because all 3 chapters will be focusing entirely on the D&D event, even if it's split apart. idk how else to explain it lol)

April 25th

Something poked Gaty, disturbing her blissful slumber. She decided to ignore it. However, the poking got more and more insistent until she (reluctantly) woke up. "What?" she murmured.

"Wake up," 8-Ball said in his monotone voice.

Gaty sighed and sat up sleepily, then wondered why she did so. Nothing exciting ever happened in the Locker Of Losers. "Let me guess. "It's 8 o'clock?"

"Yes, but that's not the point. There's something new."

Gaty was instantly alert. "What? Something new??" she asked. 8-Ball nodded and rolled away so that she could see. There was a game board of some sort, with little figurines dotted all over it. Blocky was sitting next to the board, shuffling through a booklet of some sort.

She walked over. "What's going on?" she asked Blocky. "What's this game thing, and where'd it come from?"

Blocky looked up from his booklet. "This is a Dungeons & Daggers set!" He sounded really excited. "It's a really cool fantasy role-playing game, where you create characters and go on quests to defeat

monsters and stuff! Pen, Eraser, and I used to play this all the time in between episodes of BFDI."

"But how did it get inside the Locker Of Losers? I thought the whole thing was sealed up tight."

"We don't really know," Eraser piped up from next to Blocky. "It just teleported in here. I really hope the others didn't waste the wall teleporter's charge for this, even if it's D&D!"

"None of the free objects have been in this area for several hours," TV informed from across the floor.

"Strange..." Gaty sat down. "How does it work?"

Eggy came over and plopped herself down next to her. "That thing that Blocky is reading is the rulebook," Eggy said. "More or less. You're sort of allowed to make rules as you go along. See, every game needs a dungeon master, or a 'DM,' to tell the story, or 'campaign,' as you play it..."

Eggy continued to explain the basics to Gaty as Blocky finished reviewing the rulebook and switched to the pre-made story that had apparently come with the board. While she talked, a few others - Bell, Bottle, and Cake - came over and started to create their characters. Once Eggy finished, Blocky and Eraser took over, telling Gaty how to create her character and advising her on different abilities she might want to choose.

It took a while, but eventually, all six objects (Blocky was technically the 7th as the DM) were more or less ready to play. The minifigures that the board came with were each a different object that was trapped in the LOL. Bottle had written down Bell's abilities and would move Bell's piece for her since the musical instrument didn't have any arms.

"You guys ready?" Blocky asked.

"Yeah!" they cheered.

"Hold on," 8-Ball said. "I want to play too."

"Grassy does as well!" Grassy chimed in.

Blocky looked at the story again. "Sorry guys, but this campaign only allows six players. Maybe next time!"

"Aw, seriously?" David complained. A collective sigh went up from some of the other objects in there.

"Anyway, here we go!" Blocky grinned and began to read from the first part of the story. "OUR ADVENTURE BEGINS! You six are a group of 'mercenary adventurers,' and you've been hired to go on a quest..."

(cue intro lol)

The wooden door of the tavern creaked open, letting the music of the hurdy-gurdy leak through to the other side. The first one through was Gaty. For the most part, she looked the same, except that she now had arms and was wearing a classic purple wizard hat, dotted with white stars. Bottle and Eraser came in after her - Bottle was holding a wooden staff and Eraser had a bow plus a quiver filled with arrows. After them was Bell, wearing a helmet and wielding a sword, as she now had both arms and legs. Next was Cake, who had donned a Neapolitan-colored scarf, and now had arms. Finally, Eggy walked into the tavern. Her limbs were the same, but she was decorated with a new creamy white cape.

Gaty strolled up to the bar, trying to ignore the various strange glances that other objects around the tavern were shooting at her. At the bar itself, cleaning cups and paying absolutely no attention to Gaty whatsoever, was an onion. The painted wood post reached the bar and tapped on the counter. "I assume you're Onion?" she asked.

"Mhm," Onion replied without looking up. "Whaddya want?"

"We were told that you have information about the monsters that have been plaguing this area."

"We?" he asked. Then he looked up, seeing the other five objects waiting there. "Ah. I think your information is a little off. See, I don't

know anything, but there's some guy over there who's been trying to track 'em down. I think he mighta found their lair yesterday." Onion pointed towards a corner of the tavern, where some sort of wooden bowl filled with a yellow substance was sitting alone at a large, round table.

Eraser thanked Onion and led the others over to the table. "Who's Onion?" Gaty whispered to Eraser. "And who are all these other objects? I've never seen them in BFDI before."

"They're NPCs," Eraser whispered back.

"NPCs?"

"Non-playable-characters," Eraser explained. "As the DM, Blocky controls them, as well as any enemies we fight."

"Oh."

The group reached the table and everyone slid onto different seats. The bowl looked up. "And who might you all be?" they asked.

Eraser introduced himself, then everyone else. Eggy said, "Hi!" and Cake gave a small wave.

"Pleased to meet you people. My name's Mac and Cheese!" He shook everyone's hand (except Eggy's). "You can call me Mac if you want. Now, why the heck are ya here? Did I forget to pay my taxes again?"

"I hope you didn't," Gaty replied. "But that's not why we're here."

Bell interrupted. "We're here because we've been hired to take care of the recent monster problem. Onion at the counter told us you knew where their, er, 'lair' was."

"I'm so excited to start causing death!" Bottle exclaimed, a bit loudly. A few objects nearby turned to look at them weirdly and Eggy groaned.

"Well, you came to the right object." Mac swiped away his mug of concentrated Yoyleberry juice, pulled out a map from who-knows-where, and unrolled it out on the table. "I haven't discovered the

actual lair yet, but there's several places I suspect it may be."

He pointed to a couple circled spots on the map. Most of them looked like cave entrances, but one caught Gaty's eye. She tapped it. "What about this one? It doesn't seem like a place where monsters would be."

Mac glanced at it. "Oh, that's just the tavern we're in now. Sorry - I marked it as my favorite place to eat long before I began searching for these monsters."

Eggy groaned again. "Can we just explore one of these caves already? I'm getting bored."

"Sheesh, someone woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning," Mac grumbled, rolling up his map. He looked at the circle of objects. "Most of you seem prepared enough to go fighting. But what about you?" That last statement was directed at Eggy. "I like your cape, but you don't have any arms. What are you supposed to do?"

Suddenly angry, Eggy closed her eyes and concentrated. A whip of mental energy lashed out from nowhere and smashed into the table, cleanly slicing it in half and causing Mac's mug to spill purple juice everywhere. "Is *that* prepared enough for you?" she growled.

Mac and Cheese tried to calm down and detached himself from the wall, which he had pressed himself against. "Alright, that's pretty cool," he admitted.

"Hey!" someone shouted. All seven objects turned to look at Onion, who was staring at them with a furious expression on his face.

"Uh oh," Cake said. "Time to go!" The others nodded agreement and together, they fled out of the tavern with Onion hot on their heels. "And don't come back!" the vegetable shouted after them.

Mac triple-checked his map, then looked at the cave entrance. "I think this is the place," he said.

"Finally!" Eggy complained. She had gotten even more impatient when the first cave they went to was occupied with a flea market. "Let's head in there and kill something."

"Eggy! Wait!" Eraser shouted. But she didn't listen. The caped egg marched right into the darkness. Seconds later, several things happened at once. Something hissed, Eggy screamed, and then she came hurtling out of the cave through the air. Thankfully, she used her telekinesis to stop herself before splattering against the ground.

Something moved in the cave. Then a giant snake shot out of the entrance faster than anyone could blink. It went straight for Bell, who barely managed to dodge in time. The snake got a mouthful of dirt instead.

"Now THAT'S what I'm talking about!" Eggy said, excited. She floated into the air and shot a ball of energy at the snake's head as Bell recovered. At the same time, Cake leapt onto the serpent's back, Eraser nocked an arrow into his bow, and Bottle prepared her staff for healing, if necessary.

As Eraser attempted to hit the snake's eyes, Gaty stuck her hands into the dirt and concentrated. The grass around the serpent began to grow and encircle the monster. But it was too strong - once it freed its head from the ground, it ripped away the grass like it was nothing. "Drat!"

Cake slipped two small knives out from his scarf and slashed the snake, but they didn't even scratch the skin. Bell's sword wasn't working, either, and Eraser's arrows simply shattered against the face. Only Eggy seemed to be having any luck, battering the beast by slamming energy currents against it.

"Woahaoh!" Cake shouted in surprise as the serpent suddenly shook him off, launching him high into the air. Gaty ran forward and managed to catch him before he would have splattered. "Gotcha!"

"AAAAAAAHH!" Bell shrieked as the snake managed to sink a fang into her head. "I'VE BEEN HIT!"

"I'm coming, Bell!" Bottle sprinted towards the snake as quickly as she

could. She twirled her staff around in a complicated series of movements and struck the ground with it just before the snake would have pulverized her.

The snake froze, confused. Bottle had cast a spell that prevented any allies or enemies within a few feet of her to attack in any shape or form, giving Bottle time to grab Bell and lead her away from the serpent. Eggy, who was floating directly above Bottle, was also unable to attack.

The creature hissed, still unsure of what was happening. Eraser took the opportunity to shoot an arrow straight into its right eye from afar, causing it to fill the air with a horrible, deafening screech. Everyone cringed visibly as the snake's head plopped onto the dirt, dead. Immediately, it began to dissolve into dust, leaving nothing behind except the fang that had bitten Bell.

Gaty looked at Eraser, impressed. "Nice work," she complimented.

Eggy floated down onto the ground as Bottle began to heal Bell, both of them glowing with a warm golden light. Mac and Cheese emerged from behind a rock and quickly joined the rest of the group. "That was awesome!" he raved.

"Not like *you* helped," Bell grumbled.

Bottle took her hands off of Bell's head and proudly said, "There you go! Good as new!" Then she frowned. "Nothing I can do about the helmet, though." Bell just shrugged and stood up, sheathing her sword.

Eraser walked over to the snake fang, picked it up, and tossed it to Mac. "Here's something to defend yourself, just in case."

"Thanks."

Cake scanned the cave entrance. "Seems like this is the place."

"So who should go in first?" Gaty wondered out loud.

Eraser put his hand to his 'chin.' "Bottle and I should be in the back, in case you guys need healing or ranged backup. Gaty, since you're

the strongest/least hurt out of the others, you can lead the charge!"

Gaty glanced at Bell's helmet, then at Cake (who was slightly squished), then at Eggy's fragile shell. She sighed. "Of course it's me." Sticking her pointer finger in the air, she summoned a tiny flame to light the way and traversed into the darkness.

"Hah! Looks like I made it into the game after all!" Firey Jr. boasted.

"Oh, shush," Snowball complained. "Don't make me extinguish you."

"You wouldn't dare!"

"Try me."

Barf Bag stepped between the two to stop a fight. "Boys, please. Can't you just get along for once?"

They both grumbled but stepped away from each other.

Barf Bag nodded to the group of objects playing D&D, and they continued their quest.

Drip, drip. Droplets of water slid from the ceiling and onto the cold floor, making Mac flinch every time it happened. The floor angled downward steeply, but they didn't travel for long, thankfully. Only five minutes of walking brought them to an extremely large space. So large, that the miniature flame dancing on Gaty's fingertip didn't reveal anything. She closed her hand into a fist quickly, extinguishing the Firey Jr. clone, then opened it again.

A column of fire shot out of her palm, illuminating the entire room briefly enough for the group of adventurers to see the large crowd of zombified objects milling about in the cavern, all of them surrounding a 12-foot tall zombie dagger in the center. The seven normal objects glimpsed the entire horde of zombies turning in their direction just as the fire was snuffed out, plunging them into darkness.

"Ohhhhhhhh," Bottle said cheerfully after a moment of shocked silence. *"That's* why they call it Dungeons and Daggers."

I had lots of fun writing this chapter hehehehe (even if it's just filler don't judge smh)

It was interesting to see what direction I could take it in as I was writing it, cause I didn't really have any plans - just "some LOLers would play D&D for fun"

But how did the board even get in there in the first place?

You'll just have to wait and see ;)

IDFB 10: Dungeons & Daggers, part 2 🗡️🗡️

For a moment, there was nothing. Nothing but darkness and a shocked silence.

Then Mac and Cheese screamed - an ear-piercing shriek that echoed throughout the cavern and nearly reached the ears of the objects in the tavern nearby.

Gaty unleashed another wave of fire, this time directed forward, revealing the hoard of zombies that had suddenly begun to rush towards the objects. "Run!" she yelled.

Cake, Bell, and Bottle fled, with Bell grabbing the still-screaming Mac on the way. Eggy shot into the air and began propelling blasts of energy at the zombies, while Gaty did the same with fire. Eraser backed away while shooting arrows into the crowd, taking a zombie down with each shot.

However, there were simply too many for the three adventurers - not to mention the giant dagger in the back of the crowd. He roared loudly, sending the zombies into a frenzy. Gaty, Eggy, and Eraser were forced to flee as well, shooting projectiles behind them as they went.

The trio burst out into sunlight, panting heavily, their energy nearly spent. Gaty turned back towards the cave entrance and saw the crowd surging towards them. Placing her hands on the ground, she chanted as quickly as she could. Right as the swarm of undead would have burst out of the cave, a wall of rock broke free from the earth and sealed off the cave entrance.

A single zombie managed to escape - an undead glass jar. "Guh?" it said, wondering where all of its friends went.

Bell and Cake leapt towards the jar - it didn't stand a chance. With the swing of Bell's sword and the slices of Cake's dual knives, the jar was cut into four pieces in less than a second. The glass clattered to the ground.

It was then that they realized Mac was still screaming. Using her telekinesis, Eggy picked him up in the air and slammed him into the ground, half burying him. That shut him up.

Suddenly exhausted, Gaty sat down hard. Using her elemental magic, she drew enough water from the air to give herself a drink before looking around. Eggy was standing next to Mac, huffing angrily. Her cape had a rip in it from getting caught on a stalactite earlier. Mac himself was attempting to pull himself out of the dirt. Bell and Cake were high-fiving, and Bottle was double-checking Eraser for any injuries.

"Well, Eggy," Gaty said, finally breaking the silence. "Looks like you got the action you wanted."

Eggy said nothing, choosing to simply glare menacingly at Gaty instead.

The group of seven entered the tavern from before, sitting down at a circular table. They attracted a couple of looks. Except for Bottle, who was still as peppy as ever, they were worn out from fighting the zombies, or running from them, or both.

"So," Mac said after a minute. "Did we win?"

"Probably not." Eraser sighed, "Did you see their claws? And their teeth? They'll probably break that stone wall in no time and go right back to terrorizing the objects that live 'round here."

Bell piped up. "Not to mention the fact that they're *zombies.* I mean, don't zombie infections usually... spread?"

Nobody responded.

"This just makes our job more important," Bell continued. "If that

hoard gets any bigger, they'll probably be brave enough to start raiding larger towns. And then whole cities. And then-"

"We get it," Cake interrupted. "But you saw how many there were, right? They might already be too powerful to stop."

"And what's with that giant dagger zombie? Why's *he* so much bigger?" Mac questioned.

Gaty grunted. "Well, we have to do *something."*

An uneasy silence fell over the table. After a minute of this, an armless raspberry came up to them, balancing a tray on her head, and offered them all concentrated Yoyleberry juice.

"Thanks," they all said simultaneously, taking their cups. Mac chugged half of his right away, then burped loudly. "Oops. Pardon."

"Wait..." Raspberry's face scrunched up in thought. "Aren't you the group who was here earlier today? The one that Onion banned for slicing a table in half?"

Eggy guiltily glanced across the room at the mentioned table.

Mac's eyes shifted around. "Where *is* Onion?"

"Uhh, I think he went into town to get more food."

"Listen..." Mac fished out a handful of gold coins and placed them onto Raspberry's tray. "Don't tell him we're here now, alright? I promise we won't return after today."

Raspberry gave a sly smile, nodded, and walked away. Mac looked back to see the others staring at him. He grunted. "What?"

Eggy snorted and rolled her eyes.

"Mac, you probably know this region better than any of us," Bottle said. "Do you know if there's somewhere where we can get... I don't know, more powerful magic tools? Or somewhere we can just get *better?"*

Mac thought for a moment. "Actually, yeah! There's this weird shop just down the road from here that sells scrolls, magic items, potions - all sorts of random stuff. Maybe there's something there that can deal with these zombies!"

"Great! So we have a game plan." Eggy set down her now-empty cup. She and Mac were the only ones who drank any juice - the others hadn't touched their cups since taking them from Raspberry. "Can we get going now?"

"Are you *looking* for trouble or something?" Eraser complained. "I'd rather get a bit of rest and actually finish my drink before we head out."

"Eraser's right," Gaty agreed. "Let's just sit here for a few more minutes before going."

Eggy grumbled an "alright."

"You sure this is the right place?"

Gaty and the six other objects stood outside a decrepit wooden building. Most of the exterior looked rotten, and one of the windows had a large crack in it. The large sign above the door read *Ace's Awesome Artifacts.*

"Yup!" Mac confirmed. "Trust me. This place has some *great* stuff."

"If you say so..." Gaty reluctantly followed Mac into the building.

A small bell set above the door rang when Mac opened it, alerting the playing card at the front desk. (Bell glanced disdainfully at the smaller instrument above the door.)

"Hey, Mac!" the card said, waving to him.

Mac waved back. "Yo. Guys, this is Ace of Spades." He leaned against the counter. "So long story short, we're trying to solve a zombie problem. Got anything for that?"

Ace scratched his 'chin.' "Maybe. I'd have to look around, but it's not like there's anything else for me to do at the moment."

"There *is* something else." Eggy stepped forward. "My cape has a rip in it. I don't suppose you do repairs, or, at least, sell clothing items?"

"Actually, we do! Sell clothes, that is." Ace stuck two fingers in his mouth and blew out a piercing whistle, making everyone yelp and cover their ears. "Yo! X-Ray!"

The aforementioned object popped up from seemingly nowhere. "Ah, there you are. Could you take this egg over here to where we keep our cool adventuring clothing? I'm going to help these others with their zombie problem."

X-Ray gave a thumbs up, climbed over the counter, and ran off down an aisle of shelves, gesturing for Eggy to follow.

"Ok, you six. Follow me." Ace waved his hand and went into another part of the store. Gaty had to admit - while the outside wasn't pretty, some of the (inanimate) objects in here looked priceless.

Ace led them through a long aisle of potions with every color imaginable. "What do these do?" Cake asked.

"They do all sorts of things," Ace replied. "Instant healing, speed, stamina, invisibility... you name it. Feel free to look around - the effects are labeled on each bottle."

"Hmm..." Cake picked up a glass that glowed silver and read the label.

A crash came from behind them all and they spun around. "Careful!" Ace hissed at Bottle, who had just knocked over a bright pink and red potion. It was now spilled on the floor. "If you accidentally mix the wrong potions, the resulting explosion would be more than enough to kill us all!"

"Whoops. Sorry!" Bottle made sure not to touch anything else.

Ace just shook his head and kept walking, leading them past the potions to a tall wooden cabinet. He opened it up, revealing it to be

chock full of scrolls, all different shapes and sizes. He pulled one out and looked it. "Nope..." Tossing it behind him, he took out another one. "That's not it... where are the scrolls that deal with zombies? Man, I should really organize these someday."

"I hope this doesn't take all day," Eraser complained.

"No, no, it should be right about... here!" Ace pulled out a scroll that looked like it had been old when BFDI 1a came out. He unfurled it carefully. "Yup, this is the one. My grandfather gave this to me. I've never tested it - obviously - but he said it should lift any zombie curse out there. And apparently, it also works best alongside some form of healing magic."

Everyone looked at Bottle. "I have healing magic!" she said, holding up her wooden staff proudly.

Ace nodded. "Then this should be perfect for you." He turned towards the rest of them. "Normally, a scroll like this is worth 50 gold. But since Mac is a good friend of mine, I'll halve the price."

"Sold!" Mac said eagerly. He fished the coins out from his bowl and made the trade.

Bottle took the scroll for herself and slid it down the hole in her head. "Nice and safe!" she confirmed.

Cake emerged from the potion aisle and shook the silvery potion he had been inspecting earlier. "How much is this invisibility potion?" he asked.

"200 gold."

"200 gold!" Cake gasped. "I don't think I even have 50!"

Ace shrugged. "Invisibility's a powerful tool. With great power comes great responsibility... and great prices."

"I can help chip in for that, Cake," Bell offered.

"Me, too!" Gaty said.

A few minutes later, Mac was waving Ace goodbye as the group of seven exited the store. Bottle still had the scroll tucked away safely inside her. Cake was carefully holding the invisibility potion, and Eggy was sporting a new sky blue cape. "Nice cape, Eggy," Eraser complimented.

"Thanks. Now, let's go get those zombies!"

Everyone cheered.

They reached the cave in record time. The rock wall Gaty had created earlier was still intact, but barely. There were several large cracks, and growling could be heard from the other side.

"Alright," Eraser said. "Bottle, stand back and get that scroll ready. Eggy, can you-" But he was cut off as Eggy sent a block of energy straight towards the wall, blasting it into rubble.

"Already on it," she said confidently.

The dust settled, and the group peered inside. Oddly enough, there were only a few zombified objects there, and they had already been killed by Eggy's blast. "Huh. Where are the others?" Cake wondered.

Gaty picked up one of the objects - it appeared to be a ruler of some sort. She snapped it in half, tossed one of them to Bell, and lit both halves with her elemental fire, creating two makeshift torches. "Let's go find out."

The cave looked as creepy as they remembered, with stalagmites, stalactites, and dripping water galore. Two torches provided more light than last time, but they cast flickering shadows on the walls, making the enclosed space even spookier.

Gaty handed her torch to Mac and lagged behind, eventually matching step with Eraser. "Do you think we'll be able to this?" she asked nervously under her breath to Eraser.

He scoffed quietly. "Yeah, it'll be fine!" he whispered back. "Defeating a giant hoard of enemies in D&D is surprisingly easy. Besides,

Blocky's not that creative with thinking up enemies and such. It'll be a piece of cake."

"Hey!" Cake complained from in front of them.

Eraser continued whispering. "Just keep shooting fireballs, maybe a bolt of lightning or two, and you'll be good."

"Thanks."

Ahead of them, Eggy and Mac suddenly stumbled. "Are you guys ok?" Bell asked.

"I'm fine," they said simultaneously. They looked at each other. "I just got a sudden headache," Mac continued.

"Weird. So did I."

Bell looked concerned at this but didn't say anything else. They continued to walk deeper into the earth in a cold silence.

so apparently I wrote enough for this that there's going to be a third part lol

I already have the last bit mostly written, but I'm gonna wait a couple more days to publish it. Gotta keep you hanging ;) and I'll use the spare time to work on the next chapter for *Powerless*

IDFB 10: Dungeons & Daggers, part 3 🗡️🗡️🗡️

Before long, they were at the same large cavern. Gaty stole the flames from both makeshift torches and combined them into a single fireball. Once again, she raised her hands and lifted the fireball into the center of the chamber, illuminating the room. It was almost completely empty. The only zombie there was the ginormous dagger from before with the blue handle, and it was in the center of the room, snoring loudly.

"Where the heck is that hoard that was here earlier?" Eggy whispered.

"I don't know." Bell stepped forward cautiously, holding her sword out in case the dagger woke up. "They should be here..."

"W-what if it's a trap?" Mac stuttered, wielding his snake fang nervously.

Eraser scoffed. "Oh, come on. They're brainless zombies! They won't be smart enough to lure us in here and then suddenly surround us."

As if on cue, zombies suddenly began pouring out of hidden crevices and holes in the wall and surrounded them before anyone could move. "I'm afraid you're incorrect on that matter," a familiar voice spoke ominously.

They all whipped around, trying to find the source of the speaker. "There!" Eraser said, pointing. Everyone looked upwards to see two people standing on a rocky ledge, far above. Onion and Raspberry.

"Well, well, well. Welcome... to my LAIR." Onion deepened his voice on the last word so that it echoed around the room. "Looks like I was right to chase you out of my tavern."

Eraser reached into his quiver for an arrow, but Onion tutted. "I wouldn't do that if I were you. I control these zombies, and with one command from me, they'd tear you to pieces."

Eraser froze.

"Why are you doing this?" Cake yelled.

"Why am I doing this?" Onion chuckled. "Why, for a prank, of course! I'm going to prank the whole continent by taking it over with zombies!"

Eraser sighed and glanced at the roof of the cavern. "Really, Blocky?" he complained. *"That's* the best villain motive you could come up with?"

"I'm not sure we can heal a crowd this big," Gaty said under her breath.

"Well, we have to try!" Bottle said, determined. She opened up the scroll-

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A pause. "Uhh, Bottle? You going to finish that sentence?"

"She's gone!"

"Huh?" Gaty turned to see that Bottle had, indeed, disappeared. "Where did she go?"

"She just teleported out," Barf Bag said. Everyone looked towards TV's screen to see Bottle chatting happily with the other free objects. Upon closer inspection of the TLC, it was evident that Basketball and Grassy had been teleported out alongside Bottle. *Wow, is it already really noon?* Gaty wondered.

"What are we going to do now?" Bell asked.

Blocky grinned. "I've got an idea for that."

Bottle opened up her scroll, but before she could say another word, a large fist squished her like a bug. The other six objects jumped back as the giant dagger, now obviously awake, lifted his hand. Bottle had been reduced to nothing but shards. Her staff and scroll weren't much better.

"Bottle!" Gaty cried. Eggy let out a small noise that sounded like a whimper.

"See?" Onion said. "I control these guys."

"But how?" Bell asked.

Onion grinned. "Trying to get me to monologue, I see. Well, I'll oblige! You see, it all started when I discovered...."

Gaty let Onion blabber on. She whispered to Cake, "Psst. You have that invisibility potion?"

Cake slowly pulled it out of his scarf.

"Good." Gaty nodded towards the back of the undead crowd. "I think I see Bomby in there somewhere. When I give the signal, I want you to drink that potion and grab Onion."

Cake glanced towards the zombomb, then upwards at the ball of fire that Gaty was concentrating to keep in the air. "Oh. *Oh."*

"Eggy," Gaty whispered again. "In a moment, I'm going to give a signal. When I do, I need you to launch Cake towards Onion and Raspberry."

"Huh?" Eggy looked confused. "What's the signal?"

But while Onion was distracted chattering his mouth off, Raspberry noticed Gaty's whispers. She nudged Onion with her foot. "What?" he said, annoyed to be interrupted.

"I think they're plotting something," she said.

Onion glanced down. "Hey!" he called out.

Gaty decided there wasn't any more time. "Signal!!" she shouted, then extinguished the fireball, plunging the room into darkness. However, a teeny-tiny portion of flame was sneakily directed towards Bomby, lighting his fuse without him noticing.

"Ahh! I can't see!" Onion wailed. "Zombies! Kill them!"

Gaty could hear the footsteps of several hundred objects bearing down on them at once. Then there was a resounding *whump* of air - Eggy using her telekinesis to propel Cake upwards, Gaty hoped.

She quickly pressed her hand into the ground and raised earthen walls around their group of five just before the zombies would have reached them. She then shifted the stones so there was a roof as well. The cage shuddered - probably the undead dagger pounding against it. "That should be enough to protect us," she said.

"From what? The zombies?" Mac snorted. "You saw what they did to the rock wall in front of the cave earlier."

"No. To protect us from-"

A sudden explosion shook the earth and knocked them all to the ground. They heard rocks and pebbles rain down upon their little earthen hollow from the cavern roof.

"-that," Gaty groaned, picking herself up.

Eggy blew a hole through their protective covering with her mind and stepped out, the others following. The cavern was covered in rubble. Most of the zombies had been completely incinerated. Some were still intact - like the dagger - but they all looked dead. *(As in dead dead, not undead. You know what I mean.)* The only reason that they could see was because a couple wooden objects that hadn't been disintegrated were on fire.

Mac whistled. "That was some explosion."

"Cake!" Gaty yelled, looking up at the ledge that was now partially broken. "You good up there?"

A voice filtered back down to them. "I've got Raspberry, but there's a

problem. I don't see Onion anywhere."

A pile of rocks nearby shifted. Onion lunged out, grabbing Eraser and putting him in a headlock. Several arrows fell out of Eraser's quiver. "If you know what's good for your friend, you'll stay put," he growled to the others. Eraser gulped.

"Give up, Onion," Gaty said. "It's six against two, and we have Raspberry."

"Oh, but I have Eraser! And I think it's actually four against four."

"Huh?"

Onion continued. "If you had actually let me *finish* my monologuing earlier, you would have learned that I've been stockpiling this zombie army by adding a special ingredient into my concentrated Yoyleberry juice. And Raspberry's told me that two of you have drunk some recently."

Next to Gaty, Mac suddenly dropped to the floor, clutching his head. "Mac?"

"Eggy, what's wrong?" Bell asked the yellow-spotted egg. She was doing the same thing as Mac, writhing on the floor and groaning loudly.

"You see, I have this neat little thing nestled in my stem that allows me to control the substance in their bodies, which, by now, should be taking over their minds." He gestured with a single finger to the top of his head.

Gaty conjured two fireballs into existence, one above each hand. "Free them from your control!"

"Or what?" Onion sneered. He shifted Eraser so that he was covering up the vegetable. "You'll burn up your friend?"

A shout of surprise came from above them. "Guys, Raspberry's acting weird!" Cake exclaimed.

"Oh yeah, she's been drinking the Yoyleberry juice too," Onion added

nonchalantly.

"You'd turn your own waitress into a zombie?" Gaty was horrified.

Onion just shrugged. "The things I do for power..."

Mac and Eggy's movements were slowing, and their groans started to turn into growls. "Nearly there!" Onion cackled.

Gaty suddenly noticed Eraser's right foot. He was slowly shifting it over to an arrow that had fallen out of his quiver when Onion tackled him a minute ago. His eyes met Gaty's, then shifted over to Eggy and Mac, as if trying to say, *I got this guy. Take care of them.*

"Hey, Onion," he said. "Have you ever watched *The Arrow?"*

Onion's brow furrowed. "No. Why?"

Eraser finally managed to slide his foot under the shaft of the arrow. He kicked his foot upwards, launching the arrow into the air, and caught it. "If you had, you might have seen this coming." Then he stabbed the arrow through his own chest - *all* the way through, piercing both himself and Onion at the same time.

"Eraser!" Bell and Gaty cried simultaneously.

Onion let out a little wheeze. Eraser yanked the arrow out and they both fell to the floor.

Gaty extinguished her fire and was about to rush over when something stabbed her in the side. "Ack!" she exclaimed. Whatever it was that stabbed her got pulled out and she managed to jump back. Mac was standing there, menacingly, holding his snake fang. His eyes were completely black. "Now, hold on, Mac," she said. "Let's think about-"

Much faster than she expected, Mac lunged at her again. She barely managed to dodge, but her wizard hat wasn't so lucky. Mac sliced it clean in half.

"Yikes!" Gaty summoned a gust of air and pushed Mac away from her. Across the room, Eggy was shooting blasts of energy at Bell, who was

somehow managing to cut through them with her sword. She couldn't last forever, though. Far above, sounds of struggle could be heard - probably the zombified Raspberry doing her best to escape Cake's grasp.

Something clinked against her foot. Gaty looked down to see shards of glass strewn across the floor. Bottle's body. Then she spotted some paper. The scroll!

Mac began to run at her again, but Gaty quickly used her magic to wrap both his feet in stone. he grunted, then began to chip away at it with his weapon. Gaty quickly swept away shards of Bottle. The scroll wasn't actually that bad - it had just been pierced by little bits of glass. She did her best to get rid of them, then started to read from the scroll. Pink sparks swirled around her as magic emanated from the paper.

A couple feet away, Mac managed to free one foot. Gaty chanted faster. Then a resounding *BONG* echoed throughout the chamber. Eggy had managed to get a hit on Bell, knocking her backwards and into a pile of rocks. Bell's sword clattered to the ground.

Gaty hurried her chant once again and uttered the last word just as Eggy turned towards her, ruthless anger in her eyes. The sparks that were surrounding Gaty turned green, then shot in three different directions. Two groups headed towards Eggy and Mac, completely enveloping them in a light green sheen. The third group of sparks went up and over the ridge that Cake and Raspberry were struggling on.

And suddenly, the sparks vanished. Mac blinked. His eyes were back to normal. "Uhh..." He noticed that one of his feet was half-buried in rock and looked extremely confused.

Eggy was back to normal, too. She slowly floated to the ground, taking in Eraser and Onion's limp bodies, as well as the pile of rocks Bell was half-under. "Did I... miss something?" she asked.

Gaty breathed a sigh of relief. She looked upwards. "Cake? How you doing?"

Cake peered over the edge. Evidently, his invisibility potion had worn off. "Raspberry just passed out, I think. Not sure what exactly happened there. What happened to Eraser and Bell?"

"I'll explain when you come down."

"Er... I'm not exactly sure how I should get down."

"Just jump! It's not *that* far."

"Alright..." Cake mentally prepared himself. With an unconscious Raspberry in his arms, he backed up a few steps, then took a running leap off the edge and-

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"Where are the dice?" Cake said, looking around. "I need to roll my agility to see how well I land."

Over in a corner, Black hole vibrated. "Oh. Uh, sorry, I got a little too close, and I sucked them up by accident," he said apologetically.

"Dangit!" Blocky complained. "What are we going to do now?"

TV spoke up. "I have a program that can randomly pick any number between 1 and 100."

"Awesome!" Cake glanced at his character sheet. "Uh, I need you to roll a number between 1 and 8."

TV obliged. He got an 8.

"Alright, then you land perfectly, without getting hurt at all," Blocky said unenthusiastically. "Then you guys manage to save Bell, Eraser, and Onion, get rid of Onion's zombie controller thingamajig, hand them both over to the authorities, and save the day. You win. Hooray."

Bell, Cake, Eggy, Eraser, and Gaty cheered the classic BFDI "Yay!"

Well that was fun to write! I really enjoyed creating this different styled "episode" of IDFB, focusing on some of the objects trapped in the LOL rather than the ones outside it.

so basically it's filler but shush we don't talk about that

See you in IDFB 11 :)

IDFB 11a: Temporal Displacement 🕐

May 16th

Bubble emerged from the top of the stairwell inside the Yoyle Needy. She stretched and walked to the edge of the railing, taking in the wonderful view. The sun had already risen, fully illuminating most of the colorful buildings below, but Bubble liked to take a nice, long look at the world every morning. She couldn't really explain it - it just felt nice. Relaxing.

Something scuffled behind her. Bubble turned around to see a ladder propped against the doorway of the stairwell, leading up to the very tip of the Yoyle Needy. Standing on the tip was Ruby. "Ruby!" Bubble called out. "What the heck are you *doing* up there??"

The gem turned towards Bubble, revealing that she was wearing a backpack of some sort. "Hiya Bubble!" She waved. "I found this cool parachute, so I'm going to jump off and float to the ground! It's gonna be great!"

"What!? That seems like a TERRIBLE idea!" But before Bubble even finished that sentence, Ruby pushed herself off the tip and plummeted past the soap sphere. "RUBY!!" Bubble screamed.

"Wheeeee!!!" The air resistance pushed against Ruby's face violently, almost forcing her eyes closed, but she could see enough that she was already halfway to the ground. Groping for the string that stuck out of the backpack, she found it after a second and tugged hard.

Nothing happened.

"Uh oh," Ruby managed to mutter before smashing into a million pieces. The backpack split open, revealing that it was actually just a

normal backpack and not a parachute.

As Bubble watched all this from far above, someone entered the balcony behind her. She turned to see Emerald standing there. "Hey, Emerald."

"Yo. I thought I heard Ruby up here. Where is she?"

Bubble just sighed and pointed over the edge of the railing.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

Pen idly tore up bits and pieces of Yoyleland's trademark purple grass as he waited for noon to strike. The only other one waiting with him at the Locker Of Losers was Balloony (and of course, Roboty, who was sitting on top of the metal box as he always did).

Balloony sighed discreetly, but Pen noticed. He decided that he couldn't take any more waiting and tried to start a conversation. "Hey, uh, that sigh sounded kinda like a sad sigh," he began. "You alright?"

From on top of the LOL, Roboty sensed a private conversation coming. He quickly shut down his audio processors and rotated so that he was looking at the city instead of the others.

Down below, Balloony looked a bit startled, as he and Pen had never spoken before. "...I'm fine, I suppose," he said awkwardly after a moment. "I just miss my friend Cloudy."

"Actually, I can relate." Pen sighed as well. "My two best friends, Blocky and Eraser, are both trapped in that stupid box. I know it's only been seven or so months, and I have other friends out here - Coiny is pretty cool - but I'm closest to them. And it just feels weird, not being able to chat with them everyday."

Balloony nodded in agreement. "I sorta know some people out here, but the only one I've really extensively talked with is Cloudy."

Pen stood up. "Alright, let's get out of this funk. Maybe our friends

will be freed today!"

As if on cue, three objects materialized next to the LOL - Blocky, Eraser, and Cloudy.

"Cloudy!" Balloony shouted. He ran over to hug him as Pen followed.

"Man, it's good to see you guys!" Pen exclaimed happily to Blocky and Eraser.

"Same! We missed you, dude!" They all high-fived. "And this was good timing, too," Eraser continued. "We were in between D&D sessions, so nothing got interrupted."

"How the heck were you playing D&D in there??"

"What's D&D?" Balloony asked them.

Blocky got really excited. "Oh, it's great! It's this RPG board game where you can go on quests and defeat monsters with cool spells and-"

"Don't mind him," Eraser interrupted. "He could go on for hours. Now - I need to stretch my legs. Care to give us a tour of the city, Pen?"

"Heck yeah!"

Cloudy hovered over. "Mind if we come along?"

"Sure!" Blocky said. The five of them trekked over to the clump of buildings nearby.

In a sort of trance, Pillow slowly strode in the direction of the Yoyle City Science Museum. She wasn't sure why. She just had this urge to go there. She passed several objects along the way but ignored their greetings or questions, choosing to continue her path instead. She was barely even aware of them.

After an indeterminate amount of time, Pillow reached the front step of the museum and entered. Ignoring the shattered vases and

bloodstains on the first floor, she climbed the stairwell to the second floor, then the third, then the fourth, and so on, all the way to the top floor - the 14th floor. She barely even processed the large pile of robotic zombie and spider corpses on the last stairwell, and she essentially did not see the sword lying on the ground that she almost tripped over.

Her mind clearing slightly, she glanced around the room. There wasn't much. A giant jawbreaker sat in one corner of the room, but the only actual exhibits were a large pair of scissors, some sort of crystal ball, and a rich blue statue of the number one. There were also two empty pedestals. Nothing really that exciting.

Then the statue's eyes popped open.

That surprise was enough to shock Pillow out of her dream-like state. "Aah!" She stumbled backwards.

The one statue grinned, which was odd, because it had no mouth a split second ago. Then it grew two arms and stood up on hidden legs. "G'day, mate!" it said.

Pillow stood up shakily, breathing heavily. "You startled me. Who the heck are you?" She glanced around and grew even more confused. "And what exactly am I doing... wherever this is?"

"My name's One," the number introduced themself. They hopped off their pedestal and waved at the floor they were in. "And this is the Yoyle City Science Museum!" Their voice, which had an Australian accent and was a bit rough around the edges, echoed through the small room. "A place with innovation, creation, and unsolved mysteries! Although I will admit, this room is pretty sparse compared to the rest of the building."

"Did you put me in that trance thing?"

"I did indeed!"

They didn't sound at all remorseful about it, which made Pillow grow angry, then curious. "Why did you bring me here?"

"So many questions!" One remarked. "Well, I brought you here to do a

few tasks for me. Are you ready for some temporal displacement?"

Pillow gasped. "Time travel?? Wow!"

One frowned. "Don't you consider yourself a scientist? I thought you would appreciate more complicated terminology."

"Sometimes being simple is better." Pillow shrugged.

"Whatever. I hate the term 'time travel,' but I guess we can use it," One grumbled. But they quickly brightened up and stretched their arm over to the entrance of the room, picking up the large sword that was sitting there. "Now I think it's time for your first mission." They clapped their hands twice, which was quite a feat, considering that there was a sword in one hand. "There. We have traveled approximately three months into the past!"

Present day

Emerald typed in Ruby's name to the HPRC and started cranking. Bubble, who was nearby, asked, "So, do you and Ruby have any other siblings?"

"Oh yeah," Emerald replied. "We've got 34 more. All sisters."

"Wow! That's a lot."

Ding! Ruby slid out of the HPRC slot, managing to catch the end of that conversation. "Yup!" she confirmed, leaping to her feet. "I can list all of them if you want."

"Er, no thanks," Bubble said. They began to head back to the city when she was struck with a sudden headache and almost fell over.

"Bubble? Are you ok?" Ruby wondered.

"I'm fine..." Bubble gritted her teeth and the headache went away after a moment. "Just a headache."

"Can bubbles get headaches?" Emerald pondered out loud.

Bubble stuck her tongue out at him. "Well, I just did, so there." She was feeling better already.

Emerald shrugged and they continued walking. But after a couple minutes of silence, the green gem asked another question. "Bubble... I know you say you're fine, and I apologize if I'm prying, but compared to everything that I've seen in previous BFDI episodes, you've just seemed really... off recently. So what's wrong?"

Ruby looked a bit confused at this. Bubble sighed and stopped walking. "Well..."

February 21st, 2017

Pillow blinked, and the room changed slightly. An empty pedestal had the same sword that One was holding in their hand. The jawbreaker had disappeared, and there was now a small wooden box on the other empty pedestal between the scissors and the platform that One sat on.

Suddenly, Pillow did a double take. One was sitting on their pedestal. But they were also standing *next* to the pedestal.

One noticed her looking back and forth between the two numbers with a bewildered expression on her face. "Oh, this is just past me." Present One extended their fist.

Past One grew a face and an arm, then fist-bumped their future self. "Hiya!"

"Just a warning, past me, you should expect a bit more company to enter this room in about a minute."

"Ooh, exciting!"

"I trust you'll know what to do." Both Ones chuckled at this.

Pillow felt faint, but shook her head and pulled herself together. "Isn't this extremely paradoxical?" she asked as her knowledge of time travel returned to her.

"Nah," both Ones said simultaneously. "I mean, it should be, but not if you take the causal loop into effect."

"Alright..."

"We should be on our way," Present One said. Past One nodded and their face and limb melted away. Present One walked out of the room, gesturing for Pillow to follow. They led her down the stairs and onto floor 12, which had considerably more exhibits than the previous floor and windows that illuminated the room.

With their free hand, One lifted up what looked like a silvery blanket off of a pedestal. "Hide under this invisibility cloak," they said.

"Wow!" Pillow gingerly took the cloak and ran her hand over the soft material. "I've never seen one of these before!"

One snorted. "That's the point."

Pillow raised the cloak over her head and covered herself with it. She could see through the fabric, but hoped that nobody else could see *her*. "Good," One nodded. "Now keep quiet."

"What about you?" Pillow whispered, hearing footsteps climbing the stairs between the 11th and 12th floor.

"They won't be able to see or hear me."

"How-" But Pillow cut herself off as Book and Ruby emerged from the stairwell and into the room. They immediately split up and started to inspect various exhibits.

Something caught Ruby's eye. She bounded over to one wall of the room, where there was a line of strange statues. "Check these out, Book," she called over. "There's a bunch of robotic zombies and spiders here!"

"Unless they can help protect the FreeSmart SuperVan, I'm not that interested," Book called back.

Ruby grumped, not noticing that the LED lights in the eyes of one of the zombies had started to glow. It slowly reached out and grabbed

her hand. "Hey, what the-" she exclaimed. The gem pushed the robot away and it fell onto the others, knocking them all over like dominos.

All of their eyes started to glow, and a mechanical whirring filled the room as the zombies and spider picked themselves up. "Uh, Book?" Ruby said nervously, taking a step back.

"What?" Book replied, annoyed.

Ruby didn't say anything else. Instead, she just grabbed Book's hand and ran for the stairwell that led to the 14th floor. "Hey! Ruby, what's the meaning of this?" Then Book caught a glimpse of what she was running from. "Oh."

Pillow watched in shock as the allied duo sprinted up the stairs with a small army on their heels. "Wow." She shook her head. "That gem gets herself into all kinds of trouble."

"Mhm." One lifted the cloak off Pillow's head and handed her the giant sword he nicked earlier. "Alright, your actual task is to go kill those mechanical troublemakers. Once you hear something heavy hit the ground from the floor above, start hacking away."

Pillow glanced at the sword, which was heavy enough to give her trouble when lifting it. "Er, I've never really fought anyone before."

"You can do it!"

Pillow sighed. Hearing a *thump* above her, she took a deep breath and charged up the stairwell, semi-ready to face an army in battle.

gonna be honest I wasn't sure how to end this chapter

anyway, hi again and sorry for the longer delay :(

I had fun writing this chapter though! I've been looking forward to this one for a while; I wonder what you guys think of it. Honestly, IDFBC 11 might be a 3-parter again but we'll have to see how much I write

ok back to my regularly scheduled procrastination on literally everything

IDFB 11b: Temporal Sickness

Pillow huffed and puffed, gripping the large sword tightly. She eyed the pile of robotic corpses warily, but it seemed like she had slashed each one to bits. Not a single mechanical foe was still functioning. Slowly, she let loose a sigh of relief and lowered the sword to the ground.

Something scraped against the door leading to the 14th floor. Jumping back, Pillow saw the doorknob turn just before the sound of two claps reached her ears. The doorknob stopped turning.

"Nice job!" Pillow turned to see One poking out from the corner of the stairwell behind her. "You can drop the sword now. Grab the pair of scissors from inside there-" they gestured towards the door. "-and meet me outside the museum." Then they vanished.

Present day

Fries flexed his fingers experimentally, then grabbed the large section of ruined concrete rubble. Straining a little, he managed to lift it over his head. "There," he grunted.

"Wow!" Gelatin gushed. "You really ARE super strong! I didn't believe it till now! How much weight can you lift?"

"I'm not sure." Gently, Fries set the concrete slab down, leaning it against the side of the only remaining wall of the building that used to be labelled *Juice Cinema* so that the slab was parallel to it. "I was definitely feeling the weight of that chunk of rock, though."

"How did you say you got it again?"

"Through those grotatoes that Tennis Ball created," Fries

remembered. "The second strain didn't get rid of my strength, but at least I don't have hiccups or sleeping problems anymore."

"Neato." Gelatin leaned against the wall as well. "Speaking of grotatoes, I don't suppose you-"

Fries sighed and rolled his eyes. "Yes, Gelatin, there are plenty left over. And, yes, you can have some."

"Whoopee!" Gelly cried, turning and running off to the farm near the Yoyle Needy. "Don't eat them all, though!" Fries called out after him. The package of deep-fried potatoes sighed again. Gelatin was a good guy, but a bit too goofy for Fries' taste occasionally.

Due to the nature of comedic timing, the chunk of concrete that was leaning so precariously against the wall decided to fall over. It missed most of Fries, but the edge landed squarely on his foot.

His scream of pain echoed across the city.

Present day, but at night

Pillow emerged from the Science Museum into the slightly moonlit street, lugging the abnormally large pair of scissors behind her. One, who was a few feet away, turned towards her. They were wearing a boring-looking beige backpack. "Ah! Perfect. Come with me, we've got some more work to do."

They turned again to walk away. Pillow ran to catch up. "Hold on," she said. "I have a lot of questions."

"Fire away."

"First off, if you're powerful enough to have the ability to travel through time, can't you fly us to wherever we're going or something?"

One chuckled. "I can see you have your priorities straight," they replied sarcastically. "Yes, I *could* fly us to our destination, but I enjoy walking more. All that time sitting in the museum has given my legs a serious cramp."

"Fair enough, I suppose. But about your powers, just how *are* you so powerful? I mean, it should be theoretically impossible to travel through time."

"Why is Black Hole so powerful?" One shrugged. "The universe works in mysterious ways."

"I'll have you know that there's actually a reasonable scientific explanation behind black holes."

The number sighed. "Look, I don't know how I have my abilities, but I might as well explain how things are on the world where I come from."

"Wait, you mean-"

"I come from a place called the Algebra Playground. My kind is similar to yours, in the aspect that usually inanimate objects are running around with limbs and faces, except that we're numbers or variables. I, obviously, am One, and I have the most power out of anybody else at the AP." One opened their right hand and conjured up fuzzy images of some other numbers. Pillow saw flashes of green, blue, yellow, and grey. "See, the lower the number, the more power they have."

Pillow frowned. "That makes no sense. Shouldn't it be the higher the number, the more power?"

"That's the thing. There's no highest number, as they continue on into infinity."

"Ah."

One continued as they reached Fries' grotato farm and strolled by it. "Not all numbers have power, though - they become normal after Thirteen or so, I think. At least, Fourteen hasn't displayed any sort of abilities that I know of."

Pillow was trying to absorb as much information as she could. "What can you do, besides time travel?"

"That's the biggest thing. Since it's so incredibly powerful, that's really

why I'm the sort of defacto 'leader' of the rest of the numbers. But I've got some other basic abilities." One began to count off on their fingers. "Mind control, teleportation, flight, conjuration, a bit more. Abilities vary from number to number."

"Amazing. And you just naturally have these powers?"

"As far as any of us know, yeah." One yawned. "So that's the history of us 'algebraliens,' I guess."

Sliding the pair of scissors she was holding under one arm, Pillow pulled out her trusty notepad and did her best to draw everything she had heard (due to the fact that she doesn't know how to write). "So does this mean that everything we know about math is actually flawed because $1 > 2$, and everything else?"

One frowned as they pondered this thought. "I mean... technically, yeah. But don't-"

"Wow!" Pillow exclaimed. "I'm going to have to change everything I know. So many hypotheses to revise!"

"...never mind." One sighed. There was no saving *that*.

The conversation paused, with the only sound being their footsteps and the quiet scribbling of Pillow's crayon on her notepad. After a minute, she nodded in satisfaction and put it away. "One more question for now, I think," she asked. "Why do you want my help with whatever we're doing to the timeline here? And why are we even changing the timeline anyway?"

"Oh, silly Pilly," One chuckled. "We're not changing the timeline. All we're doing is ensuring that certain events which have already happened, from your point of view, happen. As for the other question, I'm not exactly allowed to directly change the timeline on my own. All I can do is choose someone to do it for me and guide them there."

"What do you mean, 'not allowed?'"

One smiled. "Let's just say that I'm not the most powerful being in this universe."

This was enough to finally shock Pillow into silence for the rest of the walk.

Another few minutes passed, and they finally reached a tall building with a familiar-looking hole in the pavement in front. "Here we are!" One announced, breaking Pillow's train of thoughts.

She glanced at the structure, quickly recognizing it. "Hey! I've been here before! Me and a bunch of others were bungee jumping from the roof one day when someone cut Rocky's bungee cord with a pair of very large... scissors..." Realization dawned on her as she remembered that she was holding a pair of very large scissors herself.

One grinned a wide grin. "Ready to discover how it happened, firsthand?"

Present day, again

"...so, long story short, we all go to this weird, starry dimension when we die, and instantly forget all about it after we're recovered," Bubble finally finishes. "I think Golf Ball called it the 'dead zone.' She theorizes that I can remember it only because I've died so many times, but I still don't really remember details. I just know it exists."

Bubble glanced at Ruby and Emerald, who had sat down a while ago while listening to her story. "Woah," Emerald said simply after a moment of rapt silence.

"There's still a little more though," Bubble continued, looking down at her hands. "Recently, it's... felt really off. I don't know why. But I've frequently been feeling more headaches, and some weird image keeps flashing in my mind occasionally."

"What image?" Ruby asked curiously.

"I don't know," Bubble admitted. "It's always too fast for me to register it. But both the image and now, the dead zone itself, feels almost... hnng... I'm not sure how to describe it." Bubble paused. *"Malignant."*

Emerald scratched her 'chin' in thought. "You seem really troubled by all this. Have you considered going to see a therapist?"

"Emerald, nobody in Yoyle City is a therapist," Ruby reminded.

"Oh. Well, then maybe I can be the therapist!" Emerald conjured a notepad from seemingly nowhere and began to furiously write down gibberish. "Here's a question, Bubble. Do you think that there's something wrong with, what was it called, the dead zone?"

Bubble opened her mouth to scold Emerald, then actually pondered the question for a moment. "Maybe. I mean, there's a second feeling. Sort of like... the dead zone is dying. I know that sounds crazy-"

"How can the dead zone die?" Ruby interrupted. "Wouldn't that be a paradox? Or does it go to its own dead zone? Are there, like, infinite levels of dead zone inceptions?"

"That sounds awesome!" Emerald agreed enthusiastically.

Bubble sighed loudly and had to stop herself from rubbing her forehead and popping herself. "You guys, I swear..."

January 1st, 2017

Pillow waited for Fries to tromp down onto the next floor before slipping off the invisibility cloak from before. "Are we good?" she whispered to One.

"Yeah. Nobody else comes down here until you do the thing," One whispered back, stuffing the cloak into their backpack.

"Cool." Pillow picked up her scissors and crept over to the nearest window, slowly opening it. She could hear excited chatter above her from the past objects. "I'm still trying to wrap my mind around the fact that my past self is up there," she whispered.

"I suppose it takes a bit of getting used to."

"Is this the right window?"

"Yup. But don't cut Rocky's cord right away! You have to wait until he bounces back up to this level once, then cut it when he's falling again."

"Understood." The fluffy scientist leaned against the wall, waiting awkwardly. But it wasn't long before a "Waaaaahooooooooo!" came from outside, and Gelatin went plummeting past one of the windows. Moments later, Ruby, Teardrop, and Pillow's past self hurtled downwards as well. Pillow only caught a glimpse of herself, but it was enough to give her a headache.

Rocky blurred past the open window Pillow was standing in front of and she grabbed the scissors. The line went taut after a moment, then started to rise on its own as its stretchy qualities defied gravity. Rocky didn't reach the level of the window again, but Pillow waited until the line reached its apex before thrusting the scissors out of the window, snapping the bungee cord in half with a deft *snip!*

From above, Pillow heard a soft gasp and footsteps running across the rooftop. "Alright, I think that's probably enough," One said from behind her. With another two claps, the lighting changed. It was no longer noon, but much closer to evening. They time traveled again.

"One! I think we got caught!" Pillow said worryingly.

"Don't worry, that was just Needle. The only thing she sees are the scissors sticking out. She actually tells you all about it afterwards, remember?"

"Oh. Right."

One bent down slightly and rubbed their left leg. "You know what? My legs are already hurting from all that walking earlier. I say we fly to our next destination!" They grabbed Pillow before she could protest and leapt out the nearest window, superman-style.

"AAAAAAAAAHHHH!" Pillow screamed. Completely thrown off balance both physically and mentally for a moment, she dropped the scissors. "My scissors!" she shouted.

"Don't worry about it!" One shouted back over the noise of wind

buffeting their faces. "We don't need them anymore!" Pillow tried to see where the scissors fell, but Yoyle City was flying by so fast that she lost them almost immediately.

A short minute of strong winds later, One touched down next to the Yoyle Needy,dropping a very disoriented Pillow and causing a ring of air to *whoosh* out from under them. Through her fuzzy eyesight, Pillow managed to spot FreeSmart across the street. Bubble was regaining balance from the blast of air that almost knocked her over, and as she was turning around, the telltale double clap of One's hands transported them to yet another point in time. This time *(ha ha)*, it was pitch black outside, with barely a sliver of the waxing crescent moon hanging in the sky over their heads.

Pillow stood up, then immediately fell back to her knees and vomited. She barely registered One behind her saying, "Er, sorry about that. Temporal sickness is just a normal side effect of time travel, but I'll also fly slower next time."

"Uhg." Pillow wiped off her mouth and stood up, already feeling better. "Now I know how Rocky feels all the time."

"Speaking of Rocky..."

Pillow turned around and found Rocky standing next to Fries' farm, staring at both of them with big, curious eyes. He was so adorable that Pillow suddenly had the urge to hug him. "Why hello there, little one!" she cooed, inadvertently creating a nickname for him that Balloony would later adopt. Then she remembered his habit of hurling barf at literally anyone who came near him and took a step back. "Ok, One, we've definitely been caught this time," she said, internally debating on whether she should stay away or go closer for a hug and risk projectile vomit.

"Again, don't worry," One said. The blue numerical slipped off their backpack, rummaging around inside it for a moment before pulling out a wooden stick. Murmuring quietly to themself, they made a motion with the wand-like object that looked like two Z's linked together. A solitary spark shot away from the wand and landed on Rocky's forehead, causing him to fall asleep instantly and begin snoring. "He'll think that he dreamed us up in the morning."

Pillow stared in wonder as One slid the wand back into his backpack. "That thing does magic?" she said.

"Only if you know the right incantations and motions."

"So when are we now?"

One paused. "**August 4th, 2016**, if my memory serves correctly." They lifted their hand out of their backpack again, this time holding some strange small device.

Pillow read the label. "'Infinite matter generator?' I really shouldn't even be surprised at this point."

"Rocky didn't always have his barfing abilities, you know," One explained. "Well, he did, but he lost it a few years back. This will allow him to regain his barf. Anyway, this isn't just any infinite matter generator. It also doubles as a super-strong mental shield! Rocky here will be able to protect his mind from anyone who tries to meddle with it without his consent."

"Do I even want to know why he needs that?"

"Nope." Delicately, One grabbed Rocky's mouth and forced it open.

"Hey!" Pillow said, distressed. "What are you doing to him??"

"Never fear. This won't harm him in the least, I promise." Taking the matter generator, they gently slid it somewhere into Rocky's gullet, retracting their arm right after and shaking off the saliva. "Perfect. Now he has the ability to vomit again!"

"How wonderful..."

Present day, once more

Bubble watched as Gelatin chatted up a storm with Ruby and Emerald in the distance, sharing some of Fries' grotatoes as well. Bubble bit into her own potato, thinking, *Dang, these things are delicious.*

But not even the succulent flesh of a grotato could fully distract the soapy sphere from her thoughts. She hadn't told the gem siblings the full truth. She *could* remember something from the dead zone other than its appearance. It was very fuzzy, but still there. Whenever someone recovered her, her mind would fill with extremely vague images and suggestions about something. She'd listened to them once - when she and Ruby had experimented with the weird teleporter thing in the science museum, before the earthquake destroyed it.

But now that the dead zone felt somewhat evil to her, she didn't trust it. So aside from telling Ruby and Emerald, she'd been doing her best to push any thought of it out of her mind, to just forget as much as she could.

Laughter brought Bubble back to reality, and she refocused her eyes on the fun-loving trio ahead of her. *I remember being that carefree once,* she thought depressingly.

But then she smiled. Tacking down any thoughts related to the dead zone, Bubble decided to stand up and join them. After all, it doesn't hurt to try being that carefree again.

Wasn't expecting to end this chapter/episode on a wholesome note like that but there you go :)

I've proofread this, but I also did a bunch of writing in second person for something else recently, so there might be an error or two relating to that somewhere

See you in IDFB 12 >:)

IDFB 12a: The Hunt Is On

August 20th, 2016

The chirping of crickets filled in the silence of the warm, summery night air. Naturally, however, it had to be ruined when two objects materialized from thin air and scared away all the insects.

"-I swear, your jobs for me are getting weirder and weirder," Pillow continued from the first half of a cut-off sentence. "I mean, using some wall teleporter clone thing to transport a board game inside a giant metal box? Just how bizarre can you get?" Pillow snorted. "Not to mention going to Nearby Yoyleland and burying a jar of-"

"I promise you, both of those had a good reason," One protested. "Besides, you only need to do two more things, and they're both super easy and not weird at-"

"WAIT." This time, it was Pillow's turn to interrupt. She whirled around and gave One a strange look. "That other teleportation device has been in the science museum the whole time, hasn't it? Well, before you took it. Why can't we use that to free the rest of the trapped objects from the box that we just sent something *in* to?" She didn't sound mad, just genuinely confused.

"That's because some of them will play an important part very soon." One scrunched up their face. "At least, very soon from your perspective. Time travel is confusing sometimes, even for me."

Since there was no changing the number's mind, Pillow decided to just accept it for now. She looked around to gather her bearings - they were right next to the Hand Powered Recovery Center, which was sitting in its customary puddle of glue. She could tell that this was sometime in the past - the FreeSmart Supervan was still parked in front of it, and Golf Ball's seismograph was missing. "What do I need to do?" Pillow asked.

"Simple. Recover Woody."

"Woody? Wow. I haven't seen him in a long time." But Pillow obliged, typing in the balsa slab's name and cranking the handle.

Ding! Woody slid out of the machine, face-first on the ground. But before Pillow could say anything to him, One clapped their hands yet again, and Woody vanished, along with the van. GB's seismograph reappeared on the other side of the HPRC. Otherwise, it was still nighttime. "Your final task: recover Golf Ball and Tennis Ball," One said, with an air of finality. "They've been dead for far too long."

"Alright." Pillow turned towards the machine, but One spoke up again. "And Pillow?"

She turned back. "Yeah?"

"Don't tell anyone about me." They clapped their hands twice, one last time, and vanished into the ether.

Pillow stared at the spot where they had been, then looked at the HPRC, suddenly wondering if she had imagined everything that just happened with One. But after pulling out her notepad and flipping through the pages, she confirmed that it was real and that she wasn't going insane.

Something bumped against her leg. She looked down to see Rocky standing there, with his trademark grin plastered over his face. "Aww, hello, little one. How's it going?"

Rocky stayed quiet.

"Right, I forgot you don't really talk." Looking back up to the HPRC, Pillow raised her hand and quickly entered Golf Ball's name and cranked the handle. *Ding!*

"Urg..." Golf Ball stood up. Her brow furrowed angrily, and she opened her mouth to say something, but was interrupted by Tennis Ball being recovered and knocking her over.

They both got up again. TB glanced around, then back at the HPRC. "What happened?"

"I'll tell you what happened!" Golf Ball barked furiously. "That lowlife Pencil pushed both of us into my incinerator! I know she's mean, but I still can't believe this!"

"Pencil?" Pillow inquired curiously.

Both spheres turned to look at her, seemingly realizing that she was there for the first time. Tennis Ball stepped forward. "Thank you for recovering us, Pillow," he said. "If I may ask, what's today's date?"

"Honestly?" Pillow shrugged. "I'm not sure. It's a long story," she explained simply when seeing their confused faces.

"It's **October 1st**!" a high-pitched voice piped up.

"Huh?!" they all exclaimed at the same time. Both of them, as well as Pillow, looked down next to Pillow's feet, where Rocky was standing. "Rocky, did you just speak?" Golf Ball asked, her voice filled with incredulity.

Rocky stayed quiet.

"October 1st..." TB muttered. "I can't believe we've been dead for over eight months." *And I can't believe One made me skip over five months,* Pillow thought to herself.

"I swear, I am going to murder that no-good stick of graphite," Golf Ball said through clenched teeth. Pillow hadn't known either sports globule for that long, but Golf Ball looked angrier than the headrest had ever seen her.

"Calm down, GB." Tennis Ball tried to comfort the dimpled scientist. "We'll figure something out."

Golf Ball took a deep breath, held it for a second, then slowly let it out. "You're right, I suppose." She turned to Pillow. "Thank you again for bringing us back, Pillow. But it would be appreciated if you didn't tell anyone that we're alive. I don't want Pencil finding out and hunting us down or something."

Pillow gave them a thumbs-up. *Everyone wants me keeping their secrets today...* She turned around and headed back into Yoyle City.

GB watched her go. "Eight months..." she muttered under her breath. TB looked at her and saw determination in her eyes. "I'm going to find out what happened last October, that month Pencil disappeared, if it's the last thing I do."

They began to trek the long road back to Golf Ball's factory. Rocky followed them. "Really?" Tennis Ball asked, confused. "I know Bubble wanted to find out, but I didn't think you'd-"

"I'm not doing this for *Bubble,"* GB snapped at him. "I want to find out what's so important in her mind that she would leave us dead for eight entire months."

"How would we do that, though, without Pencil?"

"I'm not sure."

Golf Ball suddenly stopped in her tracks. "Of course! Rocky!" She whirled around to the lump of stone, who looked at her innocently. "All the way back in November, when Bubble initially talked to us, she mentioned that Needle and Rocky were with the rest of FreeSmart when they all disappeared. We can use Rocky to find out what happened!"

"Mm-hm!" Rocky nodded his head in confirmation.

"Quickly, Tennis Ball," Golf Ball said, increasing her walking speed. "We must get to the factory posthaste and solve this conundrum!"

TB smiled a little to himself. Seemed like GB was feeling better already.

Pillow rubbed her eyes and yawned the biggest yawn of her life. The last hour (at least, it was an hour from her perspective) had been pretty exhausting. Who knew time travel took so much of a toll on a body?

Not bothering to find a pillow *(haha)* or a bed of any sort, Pillow flopped down on a small patch of grass somewhere in the outskirts of Yoyle City, falling asleep instantly. It had been a long day, and

although she didn't know it at the time, the next one would become even longer.

(cue intro lol)

The next day (October 2nd)

Pen apprehensively descended the stairs that led down into Golf Ball's underground factory. He'd never been down here before, and although he knew Golf Ball was missing, he knew what she could be like, especially when her devices are messed with.

"Hello? Who's there?" a raspy voice echoed from below. Pen froze.

"Uh, hey, Golf Ball," he said loudly.

Pen glanced down to see Golf Ball and Rocky staring up at him from the factory floor. It looked like they were working on some contraption. "What do you want?" she hissed.

"I, uh, need to borrow a hazmat suit, if you have one."

"Why?" she asked suspiciously.

Pen gulped. "Er, Blocky wasted all of Eraser's paper towels by the bathrooms, and he needs to replace the roll with a fresh one."

"Ah." Golf Ball nodded, understanding completely. After all, replacing a roll of paper towels was a daunting task for any object. "Fine. You can have it, but you must return it immediately after you are done! I am extremely busy today, however, so you will have to come down yourself and get it. There should be one in the far corner over there." GB pointed to a spot near the base of the stairwell.

"Thanks." Pen quickly went down the rest of the stairs, found the suit, and grabbed it.

"And another thing," Golf Ball growled from across the room. "Do NOT disturb me again today."

Pen gulped again and hurried up the stairwell as fast as he could, lugging the hazmat suit after him. GB could be bossy sometimes, but today, she seemed just plain hostile.

"Uhg, why does it have to be so HOT in October?" Match complained loudly, fanning herself with a piece of paper.

She was right - despite the fact that it was an October evening, it was still sweltering outside, with the sun beating down on FreeSmart. Pencil was lying on the ground next to Ruby, both of them exhausted from the heat. Match was leaning against the door frame of the Yoyle Needy, while Bubble propped herself against the balcony railing using her arms, careful not to let the metal touch her delicate body. Book had opened herself up and draped herself across Ice Cube, which helped both objects - Ice Cube kept Book cool, and Book blocked the sun's rays from melting Icy.

Book stuck her tongue out at the sun. "Probably because August ended only two days ago, and that's the hottest month of the year around here."

"Did you really just completely forget about the entirety of September?" Ruby asked from the floor.

"Did I?" Book grunted. "I guess it just sped by."

Pencil shrugged. "Either way, it rained a few months ago, and it almost NEVER rains anywhere in Goiky. The weather's just been a bit stranger than usual recently."

"I'm *tired,"* Ice Cube groaned.

"Me too, Icy." Ruby sighed. "I wish we could keep trying to look for Leafy, rather than sit here and wait for night to cool us off."

Pencil chuckled. "That annoying lemon leaf is probably being tortured right now, being made of metal and all. I'm glad *I'm* not made of metal."

"I'm not sure we even can find Leafy," Book said. "I mean, we've been

looking for months now, and I know there's still a bit of the city left that we haven't explored, but other than when we all got trapped underground, there's been no sign of her!"

"If only we had, like, some sort of Leafy Detector," Match fantasized.

"Yeah," Pencil agreed.

Everyone sat in silence for about ten seconds before a sudden *slap* startled everyone into looking at Pencil. Bubble especially, who hadn't been paying attention to the conversation, looked back in surprise to see Pencil smacking herself in the face. "Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!" she said repeatedly, slapping herself once for every 'stupid.'

"Pencil! Stop!" Match grabbed Pencil's arms to prevent her from causing any more harm. "What's gotten into you??"

"I'm so dumb!" Pencil wailed, wrenching her limbs out of Match's grip. "I completely forgot about the Leafy Detector I had!"

Ruby sat up. "You're kidding."

"No, Ice Cube can back me up! Back when BFDI ended, us two and a bunch of the other contestants were chasing after Leafy," Pencil explained. "When we got to the Evil Forest, we didn't know which direction she had gone, so I used my Leafy detector to, well, detect her. But she escaped to Yoyleland anyway, so I just forgot that I even had it!"

"Oh, oh! I remember that!" Icy confirmed.

Book sat up as well, closing herself. "Where's the Leafy Detector now?" she asked.

Pencil thought for a moment. "Aha!" she said. "It's in the Supervan!" She pulled out the little wooden box Ruby had found for her and opened it up. The FreeSmart Supervan flew out of the container, speedily growing in size, and plopped itself down on the balcony, nearly popping Bubble in the process.

Pencil opened the back doors and rummaged around under a seat for a moment before emerging triumphantly, holding a green,

rectangular object with a red button and an antenna sticking out the top. "Found it!"

"Yay!" Ruby, Book, and Match cheered. Bubble just sighed inwardly.

"Let's go get REVENGE!" Ice Cube said with a vindictive smile on her face.

Coiny hummed to himself as he crunched on a potato. He really couldn't get enough of them, and several others also seemed to be addicted. Fries was really nice to start gardening them in bulk so that everyone else could enjoy them regularly.

He swallowed and opened his mouth to get another bite, but paused. Was that... screaming he could hear above him? Coiny glanced upwards and shouted in surprise as a large pair of scissors hurtled down from the sky, sharp ends facing down, and impaled the potato right out of his hand.

"What the-?!" He leapt backwards, nearly tripping on the curb. "Where did *those* come from??"

The weirdness continued as a large beam of light, accompanied with some very loud noises, emerged from the building next to him and blinded him. He instinctively covered his eyes from the glow, but as quickly as it appeared, the light disappeared again. Despite only getting a glimpse, the whole process seemed really familiar to Coiny.

"Odd. Where have I seen that before?" he wondered out loud. Racking his brain, it took him a moment to place the memory. His eyes widened. "Uh oh."

Coiny considered grabbing his potato from under the giant pair of scissors, but decided that time was of the essence and rushed off westwards. He needed to get to Leafy first, before the others did.

A minute earlier, the six FreeSmarters were at the base of the Yoyle Needy. Pencil raised her finger dramatically and pressed the button

on the Leafy Detector. It crackled with electricity before shooting out a blast of light in a straight line, blinding them all. A barrage of explosion-like noises battered their eardrums as the stream of brightness projected itself outwards, through several buildings and to the west.

Pencil tapped on the button again and the Leafy Detector turned off. The buildings ahead that it had pierced were fine. "And now, we know which direction to go!" Pencil said confidently. "Are you guys ready?"

Everyone else nodded, including Bubble, despite her trying to fight off a headache.

"Great! Then the hunt is on!" Pencil rotated on her heels and began to stroll westward. The others followed her, with Bubble in the back. Out of nowhere, a gust of wind suddenly caught Bubble off guard and nearly swept her off her feet. After regaining her balance, she turned around and caught a glimpse of something, but whatever it was, it quickly disappeared.

Bubble blinked. She could have sworn she saw Pillow standing there with someone else... but that wasn't important right now. Gritting her teeth through the pain of the headache, she turned back around and continued to follow Pencil.

so this chapter was so long (5700 words!!!) that I had to split it into two again lol

is it concerning that this is the second time I've had to do that to a chapter?

anyway next part will come out in 3-5 days or so

it's also a 3-parter :D

IDFB 12b: Keep your friends close

Pillow opened her eyes to see Saw standing over her. She was holding a pink and white cup with a lid and a straw. "Pillow?" Saw asked, concern in her voice. "You ok?"

"I'm alright, just tired." Pillow rubbed her eyes and sat up, noting that the sun was near the horizon. "Er, what time is it?"

"Around 6:30 pm, I think."

Man, I slept for a long time, Pillow thought.

"Where have you been, Pillow?" Saw still sounded a little worried. "You've been gone for several months! We thought you were missing like Golf Ball, Tennis Ball, Nickel, and others!"

"I went exploring!" Pillow lied. "Around, er, South Goiky. You know how hard that canal is to cross, heh."

Saw shrugged.

"But what about you?" Pillow changed the topic, only now noticing that Saw had a new handle. It looked very similar to her previous one, only slightly more angular. "I thought your handle burned off in that inverted planet. And where are all your peblet friends?"

"Oh!" Saw absently felt her new handle. "I just got this repaired at a cool place in the city, called *Handle Repairs, Scent Cleanses, and Drinks.* I don't know what a 'scent cleanse' is, but I found a bunch of replacement saw handles in there, as well as a soda machine!" Saw held out her cup. "Want some OK Cola?"

"No thanks, I prefer Bubbly Pop."

"Suit yourself." Saw slurped some soda. "As for the peblets, they wanted to explore the world, so they left in one big group about two months ago." She sniffed. "I still miss them some..."

"Oh."

But Saw was already back to her cheery self. "Wanna head back to the more populous part of the city with me?"

Standing up from her bed of grass, Pillow accepted the offer and began to walk next to Saw. "So, I assume that everyone's been freed from the Locker Of Losers now?" she asked the carpentry tool.

Saw finished off her drink and tossed the cup into a trash can nearby. "Actually, no. On June 6th, I think it was, Tennis Ball's wall teleporter teleported Gaty out of the LOL, but then it started to smoke. TB and GB were really the only scientists around here, but they're missing, so nobody really knows how to fix it. Basketball tried, but she almost made it explode. Even Roboty and Robot Flower aren't sure how to get it repaired."

"Ah." They walked in silence for a minute as Pillow contemplated something. "Sorry to leave again so abruptly, but I think I know two someones who can help with that."

"Really?" Saw said excitedly as Pillow rushed off.

"Yup! I'll be back soon!"

Saw watched as Pillow eventually disappeared over the horizon.

"A little bit to the left... there! Keep it there!" Golf Ball demanded. Rocky did his best to hold the tube in place as Golf Ball used an electric handheld drill to attach it to the helmet.

Tennis Ball emerged from one of the factory's back rooms, balancing two very large batteries on his head. "I think they're done!" he said proudly.

"I'm almost finished here, too," Golf Ball said.

TB reached the table where Remote had been lying on since they died and deposited the batteries next to her. "Poor Remote," he murmured. "Sorry for leaving you here for so long..." Delicately, he popped open her back panel, removed the old batteries, and inserted the new ones. Sliding her panel back on, Remote's limbs suddenly spasmed, causing Tennis Ball to jump back. "She's awake!" he called out. Golf Ball grunted back.

After a second, Remote's limbs stopped wiggling about. She tried to push herself up, but accidentally slid off the table, landing on a glass beaker and shattering it. TB helped lift her with his foot while Golf Ball grumbled, "Sure, go ahead and break my glassware."

Remote finally managed to stand up and looked around at the factory she was in. Turning to Tennis Ball, she said happily, "Thank you for fixing me TB!" She hugged him.

"No problem!" TB replied. GB grumbled some more.

Remote let go. "I'm going to go back to the city! Later!" She waved goodbye to the armless trio and bounded away, climbing the steps at top speed. Tennis Ball couldn't help but smile at her energy.

"Finished!" Golf Ball said behind him. He turned to see GB proudly presenting her creation. "While you were building Remote's power source, **I** actually worked on a device that will help us with our Pencil problem."

TB inspected the machine closely, but there wasn't much. It simply resembled two halves of a hollow metal sphere connected by a slinky and several wires. "What exactly does it do?" he inquired.

"Simple! It allows Rocky to transfer memories over to my mind. He wears the input helmet-" Rocky donned the half sphere with a large 'I' engraved on it. "-and I wear the output helmet!" Golf Ball did the same with the other half, identical to Rocky's except that it was labelled with an 'O.' "If I could have found my MMR, I would have used that instead, but this will do."

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Tennis Ball asked. "I mean, whatever memory Pencil was trying to protect might be something

dangerous."

"I am sure!" Golf Ball pouted. "Rocky, are you ready?"

Rocky nodded, and they sat down. "TB, you'll need to flick both the switches on the backs of our helmets," GB instructed.

"Alright..." Reluctantly, Tennis Ball flipped the tiny lever on Golf Ball's helmet, then did the same with Rocky's. Both of them closed their eyes, and the mind machine began to hum.

Although the sun had set, the night sky was still tinged with thin layers of pink and red as Pencil led her five allies through the purple grass plains of Yoyleland. They had long since left the city, and the only things around them now were bushes filled with Yoyleberries. "Of course she's not in the city," Pencil had grumbled to herself after realizing that the detector was taking them into the wilds. "Why should she be in the place that we've been looking in for months?"

But after about an hour and a half of walking, they came across footsteps. Pencil turned to the others and put her finger to her lips, indicating that they should all be quiet. Another minute of following the footsteps brought them to an ordinary looking bush. Pencil looked back and nodded to the others, then slowly crept up to the shrub.

Without warning, a gray blur burst out from the leaves. "Nyahhhhh!!" Leafy yelled, hurling a knife at each FreeSmarter. Bubble got popped. Book, Ruby, and Ice Cube barely managed to dodge the projectiles. Match didn't move out of the way in time and got a knife lodged in her forehead. She staggered backwards from the blow, but it didn't kill her.

Pencil simply caught the knife thrown at her.

This caused Leafy to take a step back, but she conjured two more knives, one in each hand, and growled at Pencil. "Leave me alone!" she shouted.

"Oh, Leafster," Pencil said, flipping her own blade around so that she

was pointing it at Leafy. "Even with your knife tricks, you seriously can't expect to take on five people alone without any friends, can you?"

"Who cares? I don't need friends. I've got knives!" Leafy said, but her voice wavered as Match, Book, Ruby, and Ice Cube stepped forward. Match yanked the knife out of her forehead, furious. Ruby looked ready for action. Book had a slightly uncertain expression on her face, her gaze switching between Pencil, Match, and Leafy. And Ice Cube was radiating anger.

Switching tactics, Leafy said, "Ice Cube! I'm sorry for everything I've accidentally done to you in the past. But don't you remember all the good times we had before that? Like when we-"

"NO!" Ice Cube said forcefully, startling the lemon leaf. Icy was usually meek, but today, she seemed to actually have a spine.

Leafy's pleading eyes met Book instead. The dictionary's expression crumbled slightly, and she opened her mouth, but one glare from Match shut her down. Leafy knew there was no convincing Match or Pencil, and seeing as how she didn't know Ruby whatsoever, that only left her two options: to fight, or to flee.

The metallic leaf gripped her knives harder. Last time she fled, she sacrificed her chances to join any future competitions, her reputation, and her best friend. This time, she would fight.

In her mind's eye, Golf Ball watched from Rocky's point of view as he, Needle, Pencil, Match, and Book transported themselves up into a ufo all those months ago. She observed as they explored the spaceship, grunting in surprise when the humans revealed themselves, and muttered words of excitement to herself as they revealed Earth's history, pre-BFDI.

Incredible, she thought to herself in amazement. *I have always wondered who the "others" were, and now I have the answer. But then that raises the question of what David and Dora truly are... I wish I could learn more about these real humans!*

Rocky's memory stream continued onto when they were chomping on chips in the human's kitchen, and one of the humans made a comment on how Rocky would be perfectly fine after swallowing an entire bag of chips whole. GB listened closer. *He's able to digest basically anything. I thought of that when creating him,* the human said.

Golf Ball suddenly felt like an arrow had pierced her head. *Created?!* Her mind continued to churn in turmoil as the objects rebelled, then were frozen, then restrained, then had their own memories wiped (with the exception of Rocky, obviously).

Another memory stabbed Golf Ball's mind, but this time, it was her own. The Science Museum, over eight years ago. Before BFDI ever started; before she could even remember *existing.* It was the same one she experienced when she went to the museum over a year ago - vases, spikes, and a younger, frightened, dimpleless Golf Ball.

More images poked and prodded at her brain, too fast for her to register, but she could tell they were bad memories. She had to wake up, to get out of this mindscape. She struggled against the mental bonds that the mind machine imposed on her until-

---

While waiting for Golf Ball, Tennis Ball wandered around the factory floor idly until he came across something that had fallen under a workbench. He bent down to inspect the rectangular device, which resembled an Etch A Sketch, only with more knobs on the bottom. The screen was taken up by a text box that said *LOW BATTERY*.

TB tapped the X at the top right of the screen, and the *LOW BATTERY* warning went away. Instead, it was replaced with a different message, which he read.

"Interesting," TB muttered. He turned around and called out, "Hey, Golf Ball. You should see this-"

He gasped. Golf Ball was squirming around violently, her limbs twitching in weird ways. Her eyes were still clenched shut and she was whimpering quietly.

Tennis Ball hurried over and body-slammed the helmet right off her head, which wrenched Rocky's helmet off as well in the process. The machine clattered away. Golf Ball's eyes shot open and she gasped, scrambling to her feet. "Golf Ball!" Tennis Ball said, waving his foot in front of her face. "What happened? Are you ok?"

GB looked at him, her eyes wild, but after a moment of heavy breathing, she calmed down some. Rocky came over as well with a frown on his face. "I..." Golf Ball tried to speak. She gulped. "I... think I'm ok now."

"What happened?" TB repeated. "It almost looked like you were having a seizure!"

GB took a shaky breath. "I'm not... exactly... sure, right now. I need to rest for a few minutes and process what just went through my mind." Inwardly, though, she was still freaking out.

TB brightened a little as he remembered something. "Well, I might have found something to take your mind off whatever that was." He gestured over to GB's workbench, which the device he had found was still lying under. "Whatever this is, it's quite intriguing. Did you make it?"

Golf Ball walked over and looked at the screen, reading the text. *1 UFO detected nearby,* it said.

"Oh no." Golf Ball began to hyperventilate, and she wasn't sure why. "They're here."

"What?" Tennis Ball asked, noticing her change in breathing. "Who's here? Golf Ball? Golf Ball!!"

But Golf Ball couldn't hear him. Her mind was suddenly flooded with memories that she didn't even know she had, hidden away from her for years and years behind a strong barrier. Visiting the Science Museum all those months ago caused the first crack in the barrier, and everything that she learned tonight about the humans made it shatter completely.

She *had* been to the Science Museum before - long, long before last

year. She didn't always have dimples. She remembered Seekayaitch and Emwhyaitch, and their third companion. She remembered that day when C and Em were away, and the experiment that the third human did on her in their absence. She remembered-

Golf Ball turned toward Tennis Ball, and he gasped for the second time. Her face wasn't normal - some of her dimples had turned a darker shade of gray, creating an angry expression. He had seen this once before, back when they visited the Science Museum, but he instantly forgot about it when they discovered the wall teleporter. "Golf Ball-"

"I'm NoT/-gOlF-bAlL/," she responded in a distorted voice, stopping TB in his tracks. Rocky let out a yelp of surprise. GB - or whatever she was now - took a step towards them, and they both scrambled backwards.

Then it stopped, and its face switched back to Golf Ball's. "NO!" she shouted in her normal voice, shaking her head furiously. "I- I won't let you take over again!"

"ToO bAd," the distorted version of herself said. It lifted its leg again, but GB took control once more and stomped her foot down. "STOP!"

"NeVeR!"

Golf Ball shook her head again, or maybe it was whatever was possessing her; Tennis Ball couldn't completely tell anymore. Finally, they looked up, and their face was a mixture of both beings. One eye was the normal black ovals that all objects were used to, and the other was a dark gray dimple. The mouth, twisted in agony, was the same way, but on opposite sides. Each part was flickering between states like someone rapidly turning a light on and off.

"AAAHHHH!!" both voices screamed at once in a disharmonious screech. "WHAT'S- HAPPENING TO MEEEE?"

C, I bring bad news. It's that accursed Golf Ball - she's discovered us!

What?! How did she do it?

From what I can see on the factory's cameras, she appears to have made some gadget that allows Rocky to transfer his own memories to her mind.

Drat. I KNEW that lump of stone would be a problem when we couldn't remove his memories of us.

No, you didn't.

Hush. What should we do?

I think that the only course of action currently is to activate our molecular attraction apparatuses.

Are you sure? We don't even know if most of them work. Not to mention that we don't have anything for those in the box yet, and one of the other targets is out of range.

They worked well enough in testing. Besides, are you able to think of anything else we can do?

...no.

Exactly. We must apprehend them all immediately.

Very well.

Fries whistled merrily as he looked over his farm proudly. It wasn't much, but it was honest work, and probably his best achievement. The whole thing was filled with healthy, green grotato plants, most of which would be ripe very soon. He had even begun to grow a few flowers along the edges, making sure to avoid planting any with pink petals.

But night had come all too soon, and it was too dark to actually do anything else. Not to mention how tired he was getting. Leaning his hoe against the fence gate, Fries exited the farm and crossed the street over to the Nice Business building, where he slept every night.

"Fries! Help!"

The sound of his name reached Fries' ears, and he turned to see Robot Flower running to him from down the street. "Robot Flower?" he asked. "What's going on?"

"I don't know!" RF vocalized in her customary glitchy voice. "I was just talking to Marker and Tree, and they both vanished in a cloud of purple sparks!"

"What??"

Suddenly, one of Robot Flower's limbs began to glow purple. "Oh no," she said worryingly. Her limb disappeared, and purple sparks began to coalesce around her. "Heeeeeeellllp!!"

"Robot Flower!" Fries reached out for her, but in a flash of violet light, she was gone. Fries slowly lowered his hand, absolutely dumbfounded.

Pencil saw Leafy tighten her grip on her knives. "Give it up, island stealer," she said. "Look at you. You're alone. You messed up, and now you're paying the price." Leafy's eyes widened, and Pencil pressed on. "It's five against one. You may have knives, but *I've* got friends. Something that you're lacking in."

Leafy winced as if that last sentence had physically hurt her. "Look around!" Pencil continued. "Did anyone come to help you out? No? I didn't think so. Nobody likes you after what you've done. Even *Firey* doesn't remember you!"

Leafy's knives clattered to the ground, and she dropped to her knees. *It's true,* she thought miserably, putting her face in her hands. *Everybody hates me. I don't matter anymore. Even Coiny...* Coiny, the one person who she thought actually still liked her after everything, hadn't shown up to help her.

She was truly alone.

Pencil smiled. She had won. "Alright, you metallic freak, let's get you into the city," she said, walking over and picking the leaf up. Leafy went limp, not even protesting at all. "Oof, you're heavy."

Pencil turned around to see Book staring at her with a weird look. "What?" Pencil said, annoyed.

Book answered, but Leafy didn't hear it. She just sighed at looked up at the city far ahead of her. Something glimmered in the distance. Something... copper?

A tiny bit of hope blossomed inside her. Coiny?

But then everything went wrong as Match got swarmed by violet sparks and vanished. One by one, they all went up in a flurry of indigo light.

Tennis Ball resorted to something he would never do. Taking a deep breath, he walked up to the conflicted Golf Ball and slapped her with his foot as hard as he could. She went spinning away and crashed into her workbench, causing papers and vials to fly everywhere.

TB sped over. "Oh gosh, I'm so sorry!" he stammered as GB picked herself up. "Are you alright now?"

Golf Ball looked at him, and Tennis Ball breathed a sigh of relief. Her face was normal. But his short-lived relief faded away as he saw the look in her eyes - terror. Sheer, unadulterated terror. "W-we need to g-get out of here," she stuttered. "NOW!"

She desperately ran towards the stairs. Tennis Ball didn't argue and followed her, Rocky hot on his heels. But right as Golf Ball began to climb, she turned purple out of nowhere and warped away.

TB skidded to a halt. "What?" Seeing something glow below him, he glanced down to see Rocky disappear as well. "Rocky!"

Then the edges of his own vision turned violet. "Oh no..."

All over the city, the same fate was happening to each and every object that lived there. All, that is, but one. Only a certain package of deep-fried taters somehow managed to avoid being abducted...

...at least, not by the previously aforementioned method.

IT'S TIME

IT'S FINALLY TIME

THE SHIT HAS HIT THE FAN

HERE WE GOOOOOOO

IDFB 12c: And your enemies closer ☹

The first thing Fries noticed was that he was *really* uncomfortable. His bed just felt like a hard, metal frame. The second thing he noticed was that he was almost vertical. *Did I really fall asleep leaning against a wall?* he thought groggily. After those two points, he deduced that he, in fact, wasn't in his bed after all.

So then where was he?

Fries opened his eyes.

The room he was in looked exactly like how he would imagine a scientist's laboratory would be like, except for the fact that the walls were a dull grey, rather than stark white. From what he could see, matching counters lined the lower half of the walls to the left and right of the room, with a door in the center. Cabinets were also attached to the upper part of the wall wherever there was a counter. On one of the counters to his left, someone was fiddling with something, but Fries couldn't see who or what yet, as both his vision and mind were still a little fuzzy from waking up.

However, he could tell that the room was quite messy. Most of the cabinet doors were open at odd angles, with haphazardly placed contents inside. One sink in a counter looked like it was filled to the brim with glass beakers. As for the floor, most of it was simply covered in papers of all sizes.

Still feeling sleepy, Fries didn't quite absorb any of this as strange just yet. It was only when he looked to his right and saw Leafy strapped to a near-vertical table next to him that his senses snapped into place. "Huh? Leafy??"

Leafy glanced over at him sadly. "Hello, Fries."

"What are- where are-" Fries tried to move his limbs, only just then noticing the third thing: he was restrained to the same sort of table that Leafy was. "Hey, what the-!"

Hey, you. You're finally awake, a voice 'said.' Fries turned (to the best of his ability, seeing as how his movement was limited) to his left to see the other figure speaking to him. But... what *was* the other figure? It was very strange-looking, with a general body shape that reminded him of something familiar.

"W-who are you?" Fries stuttered, slightly put off by waking up in an unfamiliar environment with an unknown being, a leaf that had a terrible reputation, and metal bands on his limbs.

The creature turned to him and bowed dramatically. *Seekayaitch, at your service,* it 'spoke.' Fries realized that it was speaking in his mind somehow, rather than using their vocal cords. *You may recognize my species as a human.*

"Really?" Fries questioned, now a bit curious. "I mean, I can see similarities between you and David and Dora, but-"

Seekayaitch sighed out loud. *I'm really tired of being compared to those grey-skinned goons. But you're not here to listen to me lamenting about two idiotic clones.*

"Well then, why ARE we here?" Fries said loudly, suddenly angry. He was still nervous, but this human had no right to capture him and lock him up.

I might as well start from the beginning. Seekayaitch rubbed his hands with what Fries interpreted as glee, and there was a look in the human's eyes that unnerved the fast food. *I've always wanted to do an evil villain style monologue. It all started when I was a little boy... nah, just kidding. Almost exactly a year ago, Pencil and her alliance stumbled across a teleportation device that led them here, to our spaceship.*

Leafy shuddered slightly at the mention of Pencil's name. "'Our?'" Fries asked, confused. "Wait! We're in space?!"

Correct. We are in space, and 'our' refers to me and my brother,

Emwhyaitch. Getting back to my story, I may have accidentally let it slip that we created you objects. Well, not-

"What?!" Fries cried. Even Leafy, who was only half paying attention, perked up at this.

Seekayaitch sighed again. *I'd like to finish, please. We didn't create ALL of you - only the original twenty. We placed them on Earth, started BFDI, then the presence of anthropomorphic objects created more anthropomorphic objects and so on, blah blah blah, the readers already know all this.* While 'speaking,' he went back to tinkering with the metal box from earlier. From his vantage point, Fries couldn't make out many details.

Something clicked in his mind. "Hang on. You said Pencil and the others found you last October?"

Again, correct.

"Then you're the reason they went missing for a month!" Fries gasped. "Did you abduct Spongy, too?? And Woody? And Bomby, and Nickel, and Tennis Ball, and all those others who have been missing for months?"

We are partially responsible for that, Seekayaitch admitted. *However, Golf Ball, Tennis Ball, and Remote were simply dead, due to circumstances that were *technically* not directly our fault. But everyone else? That was us.* The human reached into the top of the box he was fiddling with and pulled out a small vial of red and yellow liquid. *We've invented an elixir, I guess you could call it, that allows us to dissemble your very atoms and reassemble them into a handy-dandy pocket dimension we fabricated. This box here handles it all.*

"I- I remember that now," Leafy said. Fries jumped a little - she had been so quiet, he'd forgotten she was there. "When P-Pencil and the rest of her alliance attacked me, they all turned purple and disappeared. Then the same thing happened to me..." Seekayaitch nodded confirmation.

Fries racked his brain, and he now remembered seeing the same thing occur to Robot Flower, but not to him. He had wandered

around the city for a while, looking for anyone else, before he blacked out. "But why didn't that happen to me?" he asked.

Annoyance flickered onto Seekayaitch's face. *You were a special case,* he communicated. Fries could 'hear' the mental frustration in there. *This vial here was meant to transport you specifically.* He placed down the glass bottle he was holding onto a counter. *But we didn't anticipate your changed DNA.*

"...?" That didn't clear anything up for Fries.

You see, we created this elixir based on a being's DNA. If the DNA doesn't match, then the elixir doesn't work. For example, Leafy's current elixir will only work on her Yoylemetal form, but not her normal form. Seekayaitch walked up to Fries and poked a finger in his face. *And due to those grotato-based french fries, your DNA was different enough to fool our elixir. I was forced to go down to Earth and capture you myself using chloroform.*

"Why couldn't you just, I don't know, create a new elixir based off my grotato DNA?"

Seekayaitch barked out a single laugh, short and condescending. *Bold of you to assume it's so simple. No - each object's elixir takes months to procure. We had to manually reconstruct each object's DNA without any basis whatsoever. I do not think you quite understand how frustrating that is.*

An idea sparked in Fries' mind, but it was quickly pushed away by the human's continued monologue. *We were eventually forced to disrupt the wall teleporter's inner mechanisms with an ion beam so that we could have more time to work on the elixirs for all you free objects, and create the trapped object's respective elixirs later.*

"That was you??"

Yes. Seekayaitch snorted. *You couldn't have really thought that it randomly ceased to function one day for plot convenience, could you? But my point is, if we WERE able to create new elixirs so easily, you all would have been, I suppose 'abducted' a long time ago. In fact, we had to activate the device with the elixirs much earlier than expected.*

Leafy spoke up again. "Why is that?"

If you really want to know... long story short, Golf Ball discovered that we were floating above Yoyleland, so we were forced to abduct you all ahead of schedule.

Fries felt like the conversation had finally reached a topic of importance. "And why exactly did you *want* to abduct us?"

To experiment on you, of course.

"Oh, for..." Fries mumbled in protest. He could hear Leafy begin to struggle against her bonds behind him.

Since I have already gone quite far and explained about how the elixirs work, I may as well tell you why we want this. Seekayaitch smiled faintly. *You see, humans have searched for many myths and legends, and we've found a surprising number of them, actually. But one thing that has constantly been out of humanity's reach for thousands of years is immortality. After we reach a certain age, we expire. Not to mention that there are a million other ways to die.*

But recently, Emwhyaitch and I realized that there was a possibility of actually reaching this goal... your recovery centers. We created them years ago, when realizing how easy it would be for you objects to kill each other. Bubble especially. It was surprisingly simple, but we were never able to recreate the process for humans. There's this whole problem with keeping our memories that you objects don't have, but that's not important.

"Then what *is* important?" Fries growled.

What's important is now that we have all of you, we can experiment on all the recovery centers AND you objects. Seekayaitch's smile grew larger and extremely unsettling. *And I'll let you in on yet another secret. My brother and I, we used to care about morality, but not anymore. We'll do anything necessary to learn the secret of recovery for humans, even if it means killing you whole lot repeatedly.*

Fries started to shake.

"O- one more thing," Leafy stammered. "Why are y-you telling us all

this?"

Oh, that's easy. I don't believe you will be able to spill these secrets to anyone else, seeing as how you're never getting out of here.

A defeated sigh came from Leafy. Fries began to panic and struggled against his bonds. *Oh dear,* Seekayaitch said. *Looks like I will have to chloroform you again to calm you down. Now, where did I put it...?* The human bent down and started rummaging around the cabinet under the counter.

The bond on Fries' left hand creaked quietly, and he paused in confusion. Seekayaitch emerged from the cabinet, grumbling to himself out loud. *Guess I misplaced it.* He pointed to Fries and Leafy. *Don't go anywhere.* His chuckling followed him all the way out the door of the lab and into the hallway beyond before fading away.

Fries waited another thirty seconds to make sure he was gone, then dedicated all of his body strength into straining his left arm against the metal cuff that held it in place. It shifted slightly, then snapped with a *crack!* His arm flew free. "Finally," he muttered to himself as he worked on the other three bonds. "A use for this odd, grotato-induced super strength."

In no time, Fries had managed to free himself. His legs felt a bit wobbly from being under the influence of chloroform recently, but the fast food stepped over to Leafy's table and started to rip her restraints off as well. "Come on, Leafy," he grunted. "Time to get out of here."

With a bit of effort, he removed all four of her bonds. But instead of standing up, Leafy simply slid to the ground, limp once more. "What's the point," she muttered, closing her eyes. "They'll just catch us again. Who knows what other technology they have that can overpower us..."

Fries paused. He had originally planned to free Leafy and then simply charge through the UFO until they found and beat the humans, but even in her depressed state, the metallic leaf made a good point. If they got caught a second time, then security would surely increase.

The package of taters glanced around the room, looking for something to block the door with, then decided to just use the table he had been attacked to. Ripping it out of the floor with a groan, he propped it against the bottom half of the door. "That should hold them until we can figure something out."

Fries turned to Leafy, who was still lying on the floor. "Come on. Get up."

"No."

"Why not?"

"No point." She sighed again, then muttered something about having no friends.

At this point, Fries was pretty irritated. He had been knocked out, kidnapped, restrained, and berated, and now that they had a chance to escape - albeit, a small one - his only ally was worried about not having a social life.

He grabbed Leafy and lifted her up so that their faces were at the same level. She still didn't respond. "Look. I know that this situation is grim, and that you think your reputation is completely ruined." *Which it sort of is,* he thought, but he didn't voice it. "But if we can get out of here and free everyone else, they'll probably treat you as a hero. Or at least, as an equal. And who knows? Not *everyone* is terrible - I'm sure there's still someone who sees you as a friend."

Leafy opened her eyes and thought for a moment. *He's right,* she realized. She remembered a vague image of Coiny sprinting towards her in the distance when everything happened with Pencil's alliance earlier, but getting abducted had pretty much knocked that memory out of her head until now.

"T- thank you," she said, almost meekly.

Fries nodded and set her down on her feet. "Now," he said, putting his hands on his 'hips,' "let's look around for anything we can use against... what was his name? Sokka? You know what I mean."

Leafy nodded back. With newfound determination fueling her, she

opened the nearest cabinet to search through the contents. Fries did the same. They found a couple of odd devices, but nothing particularly useful.

Fries tried to pick up the medium-sized metal box Seekayaitch had been tinkering with earlier, but it was attached to the counter, and he didn't want to rip it off with his super-strength in case he damaged anything. It was rectangular, with a glass lid and a screen on the front. Fries peered through the top to see rows of vials, all filled with what he assumed to be elixirs in all colors of the rainbow. All but three of the elixirs were glowing - one was gunmetal grey, another was electric yellow, and the third was a light blue. Each slot that held a vial was labelled with different objects, but some slots were empty, and a couple of the empty ones didn't even have labels. "Huh." He tried to open the lid, but it was locked.

Shifting his attention, Fries tapped the screen on the front of the box and it lit up. *Welcome to the Extraneous Internalized Tract!* it read. That text then disappeared, replaced by a menu. "Huh," Fries said a second time, as the menu also had the names of the objects of Goiky. There was even an option for Emerald, Ruby's sister. He glanced through the lid again and noticed that both lists were ordered alphabetically.

Fries tapped the icon labelled 'Puffball,' and a popup appeared, reading *ENTER PASSWORD*. A touchscreen keyboard also appeared. Fries tried typing in 'password.'

PASSWORD INCORRECT. PLEASE TRY AGAIN.

"Dang it." He closed the popup and perused the rest of the screen carefully, but other than the icons and a power button, that was it.

Out of nowhere, the handle of the door that led to the hallway outside wiggled, causing Fries to jump a little. *Hey!* Seekayaitch's words filtered into Fries' mind. *What's going on in there? How have you locked the door?*

Fries ignored him and turned to Leafy. "Found anything?" he asked, a bit worried now that Seekayaitch had returned.

"Not... yet... AHA!" she cried triumphantly, pulling out a large sheet

of paper from underneath various others covering the floor. "A map of Yoyle City! We can use this to escape!"

"How?"

"If I look at a certain point on a map and chant a special rhyme, I'm able to instantly transport to that point!"

A bang on the door made them jump again. *Open up!* Both objects winced, as Seekayaitch had raised his telepathic voice in their minds. "That's incredible," Fries said to Leafy. He gestured to the Experimental Internalized Tract from the counter. "I tried getting the others out of this weird box dimension thingy, but it's password-locked. I'd take it with us to try and figure out the code-"

Don't you dare!

"-but it's attached to the counter, and I don't want to damage it. We should just use the map and get out of here for now.

Leafy's smile wobbled dangerously. "Actually, I'm not sure if I'm able to take anyone with me through the map. I've never tried it before."

STOP! More banging.

"Always a first time for everything."

"But there's another problem," Leafy said. "They can just use their elixir on me again, even if we escape."

"OH!" Fries suddenly remembered something. Reaching into his container, he pulled out a small button and pointed it at Leafy. "Hold still."

LET ME IN!

"Uh, what are you-"

Zap! Fries' De-Yoyler encased Leafy in light. When it dissipated, she was back to her green self. "Wow!" Leafy said in awe. "It's been *years* since I was normal. I feel so light!"

Fries smiled a little and stepped over to her, and she placed one hand on the side of his head. She looked down at the map and sang, "Blue, skidoo, we can too!"

Vwoop! The sound of a slide whistle emitted from the ether as Leafy was sucked into the map. It fluttered through the air before resting on the floor.

Fries, however, was left behind. To vent his absolute frustration, he uttered one of the most vile curses known to objectkind. "Drat."

"DAMMIT, OPEN UP THIS DOOR RIGHT NOW!" Seekayaitch roared out loud from the other side of the blocked exit, causing Fries to jump in alarm. *He must be MAD if he's actually speaking,* he thought. The human continued to slam himself against the door.

Fries sighed and lined himself up with the door, readying a stance. *Looks like I'm stuck here. May as well go down fighting.*

"Yaaaaaahhhh!!!" Fries yelled, charging at the door. He jumped over his barricade and, arms outstretched, slammed against the top half, ripping the door off of its hinges and pinning Seekayaitch between it and the floor. Fries landed on top, causing Seekayaitch to emit an "oof" of pain.

The fast food looked to the left, seeing another human barrelling towards him from down the hallway. The human lifted his hand and tossed a syringe full of freeze juice at Fries. He reached out and barely managed to catch it before it would have impaled him in the forehead.

From under the door, a hand reached out. Held in the hand was a rag, which was thrust into Fries' face. He immediately felt woozy. Chloroform. Fries dropped the freeze juice and swatted hard at the hand in his face, batting it away. There was a *snap* and a scream as the rag flew out of the hand's grip, and as his mind was clearing, a sharp pain pierced his knee. A cold feeling spread across his body.

Then, darkness.

oh man I've wanted to write this chapter for SO long you have no idea

and I'm going to really enjoy writing basically every chapter after this (not that I haven't enjoyed making the previous chapters; it's just that we're finally getting into the action)

also I'm planning something new to publish, should be out in a few days hopefully, maybe even sooner!

See you in IDFB/13 >:)

IDFB 13a: Yeah, how? I wanna know! ⚡

October 2nd

Nighttime in Yoyle City. The sun had long since set, and the stars were out to play. The moon was approximately three-quarters full, and growing fuller every night. It shined its light upon the buildings, where absolutely nothing moved.

Except... a green object flickered between streets and alleyways, doing its best to stay mostly out of sight. It was about to dart across another section of asphalt when a blinding light hit the road, and it scrambled to get back inside the trash can it was just hiding in.

The light in question was coming from a spotlight, which was attached to a large ship hovering a couple miles over the city. It continued to sweep across the same street before moving on. The object waited another minute before climbing out of the trash can and to the other side of the road.

Several antagonizing minutes later, Leafy (for of course it was she) finally reached the Hand-Powered Recovery Center. Glancing behind her to make sure the ship was far enough away, she apprehensively tapped a few keys. "B... U... B... B again... L... E..." she muttered to herself while typing. A noise spat out of the machine, and Leafy began to crank the handle.

Ding! The customary sound effect of the HPRC signaled Bubble's recovery back into the world. She stood up, one hand rubbing her eyes. "Erg..."

"Bubble! Quick! Eat this Yoyleberry!" Leafy said hurriedly.

"Huh??"

Leafy pulled out a Yoyleberry and forcefully stuffed it into Bubble's mouth without popping her. She swallowed instinctively, gagging as it went down her throat whole. "Gah. Not again..." Within seconds, she was made of Yoylemetal through and through. "Leafy, why'd you- wait! You popped me earlier! And why did you just make me eat a Yoyleberry?"

"Sorry about that, Bubble. I'd love to catch up with you, but we don't really have time to talk."

"What do you mean?" Then Bubble noticed the UFO floating ominously above Yoyle Mountain. "OMBB! What in the world is that??"

Leafy realized that the ship was beginning to move back towards the city. "I'll explain in a bit, but first we need to go get some other people. Come on!" Leafy dashed off towards the cluster of buildings, leaving Bubble no choice but to follow her.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

They ran for several minutes straight before pausing. Bubble put her hands on her knees, breathing heavily. It had been a while since she'd exerted herself like that. "Please... tell me why... we're running... so fast," she panted, out of breath.

Leafy looked at her sympathetically, feeling pretty tired herself. "I don't want to have to explain everything twice, ok? Let's just wait until we find the others. All you really need to know right now is that- LOOK OUT!"

The lemon leaf tackled Bubble, pushing both of them off the sidewalk and into an alleyway just as the spotlight from before swept over the spot Bubble was previously standing in. They got up and spat dirt out of their mouths. "Leafy!" Bubble complained.

"Sorry," Leafy apologized again. "But we can't let them see us."

"Who's *they?!* And why are you being so mysterious about all this?"

Leafy raised her hands in defense. "Just be patient."

Bubble sighed and rubbed her eyes. "Sorry... I'm just trying to process a lot. There was that whole thing from earlier, when you attacked us, and now you're being really secretive about some weird UFO, and on top of all that, I've just got a massive headache, so I can barely think."

"Well, I promise that most of this will make more sense soon-"

Leafy stopped. Another glow was beginning to grow on the street - but it wasn't the spotlight. A jagged bolt of energy drifted by the entrance of their alleyway. "Hello?" it called out, before floating away.

"Hey!" Leafy called out. "Over here!"

Lightning returned and entered the thin space between buildings. "Finally! Other people! I can't find anyone else in the city; it feels deserted. Can you clarify where the heck everyone is?" He paused. "You're... Leafy and Bubble, right? I don't think I've met you guys before."

"That's right. I'll explain later, though," Leafy said, pulling out another Yoyleberry. "For now, just eat this."

Lightning eyed the berry warily. "What's that? Will it hurt me?"

"No, it only turns you to metal, like Bubble over here. Trust me, it's safe - I lived on these things for years."

"Alright." Lightning took the berry from Leafy and stuck it in his mouth, chewing slowly. "Mmm. Tangy and sweet." He swallowed, and after a moment, his glow faded, replaced by the silver sheen of Yoylemetal. "Ah!" Lightning cried, jumping back. "Why is everything blacker??"

"Well, you're not glowing anymore, so it's dark..." Bubble replied.

Lightning looked at his hands in wonder. "You mean darkness is *real?* I thought the others in the Locker Of Losers were kidding about that!"

"You mean you've never known darkness before because you're

always glowing?" Leafy questioned. Then she shook her head. "Actually, never mind that. We're getting distracted. Lightning, can you fly us to the LOL?"

"Probably, but I would assume Bubble's pretty heavy now, being made of metal and all. I'll try, though." Lightning grabbed Leafy's hand in his left and Bubble's in his right and pulled them into the air. "Oof. I'll manage."

"Try to get there as fast as you can without being seen by the spaceship," Leafy added. The energy bolt nodded and began to soar off westward.

Barely a minute later, the trio arrived at the large metal box. Lightning gently set Bubble and Leafy down. Distracted by her headache, Bubble stumbled when she touched ground, but regained her balance quickly.

Leafy inspected the dead wall teleporter, still standing on its tripod outside the LOL. "How does this work?"

"Normally, it takes the votes from the viewers and teleports three people out every three weeks or so," Bubble explained. "But it stopped working in June. Nobody knows how to fix it since Golf Ball and Tennis Ball disappeared again."

"Hmm." Leafy scratched her 'chin.' "Maybe it's just out of battery. I wonder..." Experimentally, she reached towards Lightning and tapped him on where his nose would be, if he had one. A loud *ZAP* sounded and several hundred volts coursed through Leafy during the split second that she made contact with Lightning's metal body. "Yup," she said woozily. "You're still electric somehow. Do you think you could..." She groaned and sat down.

"Sure! It's what I do best!" Enthusiastically, Lightning floated over to the wall teleporter and bore down on it with as much force as he could muster. Both objects shook with energy. The wall teleporter suddenly shot out from under Lightning and slammed against the side of the LOL, causing it to smash to pieces.

"Lightning!" Bubble scolded, shocked. "Look at what you've done!"

Leafy groaned again and stood up. "Great. I was hoping that we could have reinforcements..."

Something scuffled against the ground. Bubble, Leafy, and Lightning turned to see three new objects staring back at them. "Woah," one of them said in a monotone voice. "Nobody's ever been freed at night before."

Leafy quickly tried to shake off her electricity pain and waved at them, putting on a smile. "Hiya! I'm Leafy. I don't think I've met any of you before!"

The unknown object who had just spoken before rolled forward. "Hello, Leafy. My name is 8-Ball."

"I'M BRACELETY!" a second one screeched eagerly. Everyone visibly cringed at the volume of her voice.

"Dadadadadadadadadadadadadadadadada. (As for me, my name is Dora. I am pleased to make your acquaintance.)"

Leafy and Bubble just stared at her blankly. "That's Dora," Lightning clarified. "Apparently, she speaks perfect Spanish at such a speed that nobody can understand her."

"But nobody here can speak regular Spanish anyway," 8-Ball continued. "So it's pretty pointless to try to talk with her at all."

"Dadadada. *[translation expunged due to vulgarity]"*

"Anyway," Bubble said, shooting a glance at Leafy, "if everyone is *finally* gathered, then can you please explain what exactly is going on? You forced Lightning and I to eat Yoyleberries, there's some weird UFO flying around above the city supposedly looking for us, and everyone else outside the LOL has gone missing!"

The other four objects looked at Leafy expectedly. "Clarification, *please?"* Lightning prompted.

Leafy checked behind her. The humans' spotlight was currently sweeping the east side of the city - they were probably safe for the time being. She looked back at everyone and sighed, her smile

fading. "Well..."

Trying to get all the details while being as quick as possible, Leafy explained what happened inside the UFO and everything she had learned. It only took a couple minutes, but it felt like forever with the humans looming above the city.

When she finished, everyone was silent for a good minute. None of them had spoken a word while she was talking, either. "Wow," Lightning said after a moment.

"That pretty much sums it up," Leafy agreed.

Dora spoke up. "Dadadadadadadadada. (That's quite a story.)"

"OH!" Bracelety realized something. "THIS EXPLAINS WHY TV LOST ROBOTY'S SIGNAL A COUPLE HOURS AGO. HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN ABDUCTED!"

"Gh... so..." Bubble rubbed her face again. "We were... *created?* By these humans?"

"Only you and me, plus the other 18 original BFDI contestants that are trapped up there."

"That doesn't really help..."

"Dadadadadada? (I wonder, then, how do I exist?)"

8-Ball glanced warily over at the grey-skinned clone. "Can we trust Dora? Technically, she's a human, too. Even if she's different from the one you described."

"PROBABLY! SHE'S NEVER DONE ANYTHING BAD TO ANY OF US WHILE IN THE LOCKER OF LOSERS!" Bracelety pointed out.

"Good point."

"So to clarify, Leafy," Lightning said, "are you saying that we need to somehow get up to the human's spaceship, break in, and free everyone else?"

"That's exactly what I'm trying to say."

"But how?" 8-Ball wondered.

"YEAH, HOW? I WANNA KNOW!"

"We need a plan." Leafy tapped her foot against the ground repeatedly in thought. "Bubble, you've been here the longest - you know this city better than any of us. Is there anywhere that we can find something useful?"

Bubble had partially tuned everyone out. Her headache was progressively getting worse, and that same *image* was flashing behind her eyeballs more and more frequently. But when Leafy said her name, she did her best to listen again, and after hearing the question, a certain building popped into her head. "I think I might know a place."

8-Ball rolled straight into the doors of the Yoyle City Science Museum without slowing down, causing the already-decayed wooden slabs to fall off their hinges and land on the floor with a *whump*. "Well, that was unnecessary," Lightning muttered before floating inside. Everyone else followed them in.

Leafy quickly observed the floor they were on. "Hmm. There's not really much here," she noted. "How many floors are there?"

"I think there's a lot, although I've never gone further than the second floor," Bubble replied. She pointed to a set of stairs in the wall and began to climb. Everyone else except 8-Ball ascended the steps as well. "Oh, sure, leave me behind. I'll just stay down here," he said sarcastically.

The second floor had considerably more exhibits than the previous one, and it was also much more intact, save for a statue that had toppled over onto something else in a corner of the room. Everyone spread out to look for things that might be of any help. Leafy considered grabbing the oddly-shaped pickaxe she was looking at, but decided against it.

Bracelety plodded over to a pedestal and inspected the exhibit shown there. It was a glass bottle, but not like one she'd ever seen - it was all pixelly and filled with a silvery liquid that glowed softly. She tried to read the description, but it was in Yoylese. "HUH." She picked it up and quickly trotted down the staircase that led back to the first floor.

Meanwhile, Bubble was leaning against the statue, not really being helpful. But her mind was very occupied - partially with everything Leafy said, partially with her headache, and partially with the dead zone. She was absolutely certain now that it actually existed, and she was also certain that something was wrong with it. From the fuzzy things she remembered, it was mostly a black void, with shimmering twinkles of light far off in the distance, not dissimilar to outer space. But she believed that before Leafy recovered her earlier, she recalled seeing most of the 'stars' turning red. Bubble pondered what it could mean, but she didn't have a clue

She winced as her headache pounded harder against her nonexistent skull. It was still getting worse...

"Alright, what have we got?" Leafy asked. It was about half an hour later, and the six objects had returned to the first floor to discuss their findings.

"Well, I couldn't really find anything, seeing as how I can't get past this floor," 8-Ball complained.

Lightning floated forward and held out something sharp. "I found an arrow," he offered.

"I want to try to avoid hurting the humans if possible," Leafy countered. "Besides, it's not that useful without a bow. And couldn't you just electrocute them, anyway?"

"Oh yeah."

8-Ball spoke up again. "Why would you want to avoid hurting them, Leafy? Didn't they threaten to hurt you and Fries, and all the others?"

"Because I believe that they can be helped! If we just head out with

the sole purpose of hurting them, we're only continuing a cycle of violence that can't be broken with more violence. We have to give everyone a chance!"

(cough cough this also applies to us humans)

"Dadadadadadadadadadadadadada. (I am a powerful weapon myself, so I did not consider anything in this building of any use to our current situation.)"

Leafy sighed. "Since you're not holding anything, Dora, I'm going to assume that you haven't found anything either. Bubble?"

Bubble shook her head distractedly.

"Wow... I know that most of the stuff I found was useless, but you guys really didn't find anything else we could use?"

"I DID!" Bracelety shouted. Leafy's eyes lit up, and Bracelety whipped out an odd-looking glass bottle from behind her. "I THINK IT'S AN INVISIBILITY POTION!"

"Really?" Lightning sounded skeptical.

8-Ball inspected the liquid inside. "Hmmm. It certainly looks like how Blocky described one would be in the first DND game."

"The first what?" Leafy and Lightning asked simultaneously.

"OH! DND IS-"

"-not important right now," 8-Ball interrupted. "Bracelety, are you sure that it works?"

"YUP! I DRANK A LITTLE, AND NOW I'M TRANSPARENT!"

Leafy squinted. If she concentrated, she could just barely see the outline of Dora standing behind Bracelety. She did her best to smile. "Wow. Thank you! At least we have something..."

"What's next, then?" Lightning floated closer.

Leafy began to think and was silent for several seconds. "...it's time to come up with a proper plan."

yay for more characters, and for Lightning finally returning! took him long enough haha

sorry this chapter was later than usual; I took a short break after the last one cause it was Christmas break, and then got unexpectedly swamped with school stuff after, but that's mostly sorted out now! I hope

on a similar note, one or two of the CO short stories should hopefully also be finished pretty soon so there's that too! ok bye for now

IDFB 13b: Infiltrating the Spaceship

The ambience of beeping and whirring from various electronics filled the air as Emwhyaitch sat in one of two chairs. He stared at the combination window/screen that allowed him to see out the front of their ship while he scoured Yoyle City for a certain lemon leaf.

He heard the *hiss* of a pneumatic door open behind him, and Em turned to see Seekayaitch walking unsteadily into the room. His left hand and upper arm were wrapped up in a cast. *How are you feeling?* Em projected over to his brother.

Itchy. But better, I suppose. Seekayaitch absently scratched his cast, then winced. *I'm still having a hard time believing that Fries was strong enough to break my hand by hitting it so casually. At least I'm a righty.*

Perhaps the increased muscle mass is a side effect of his grotato-based chips, Em mused. *It's a good thing we've replaced them with regular ones now.*

C managed to wobble over to the second chair and collapsed in it. *I feel like I could sleep for a week.*

You SHOULD get some rest. Fries could have killed you if he wasn't careful!

All the more reason to find that leaf so we don't have any more problems with our experimentation. C shifted in his seat, then got up. *Want anything from the kitchen?*

I've already had dinner, and you know that you can't carry much with only one functional arm.

C shrugged with his right arm and began to stroll towards the kitchen

door. At the same moment, Em spotted something on the screen. *Seekayaitch! Come look!*

The second human turned on his heels and hurried back. *What is it? Have you found her?*

The duo looked at the screen together, but whatever the object in the air was, it was too far away to see properly. Em zoomed the camera in and the image focused. *How peculiar.* 8-Ball, one of the objects they thought to be trapped in the Locker Of Losers, was speeding towards them. *How is he airborne?*

C took a nervous step away from the control panel. *Emwhyaitch, I think you should-*

But before the thought was completed, 8-Ball smashed through the window and tumbled into the room, spraying glass shards everywhere and narrowly missing both humans. Em caught a glimpse of Lightning holding onto 8-Ball before letting him go. Bracelety and Bubble, who were also holding onto Lightning, jumped off and rolled across the floor. Lightning himself slammed into the far wall, making a large dent in the metal and knocking himself unconscious.

Red alert! Em shouted in C's mind. Em dashed off to the kitchen where a box of freeze juice-filled syringes was kept in the freezer. C shook off his surprise and barely managed to duck in time to avoid Bracelety leaping towards him. She sailed over his head and skidded along the floor behind him.

He turned to head to the kitchen as well, but an intense burning sensation in his foot suddenly caused him to stumble. C looked down to see that 8-Ball had rolled straight over his right foot. "Ha ha," 8-Ball mocked as he rolled away before C could punch him with his good hand.

Em came running out of the kitchen, holding a small, wooden crate. *I got the-* But he tripped over Bubble's outstretched leg and face-planted onto the floor. The box slid all the way over to C's feet. He quickly opened the box the best he could with one hand and grabbed a syringe, scanning the room to figure out which object would be the best target.

The decision was made easy for him when Dora crashed through the floor out of nowhere.

When Lightning pushed 8-Ball through the window, Leafy was ready. She immediately let go of Bubble's legs and landed on her feet, dashing to the right side of the room. Since she had drunk the invisibility potions seconds before Emwhyaitch's camera spotted them, she managed to pass through unnoticed by the human siblings.

A quick glance behind her showed nothing but chaos. She winced when 8-Ball rolled over Seekayaitch's foot and decided to stop paying attention and actually do her job. The plan: have Lightning carry everyone up to the spaceship and distract the humans while Leafy snuck off, invisible, and looked for a way to release everyone else from that odd box Seekayaitch had explained during her short time on the ship. (Tired of not being understood, Dora had finally written on a piece of paper that she was strong enough to jump to the ship on her own from the top of a building, as Lightning couldn't carry all five of them at once.)

Leafy turned her attention to the door labelled 'NO UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ALLOWED.' She briefly felt guilty for breaking and entering, but then remembered that the humans seemed a bit crazy and tried to push it aside. She lay down on the ground and slid underneath the door. Being paper-thin had its advantages.

After getting up, the first thing she noticed was that it was noticeably quieter. She could still hear scuffling outside, but it was severely muffled. *The room must be soundproofed,* she thought.

Leafy glanced around. It wasn't a very large room. In the far right corner was a normal filing cabinet. In the far left corner was a very *ab*normal machine. A sideways tube was connected to two small Tesla coils, both of which were crackling with red-tinged electricity. The glass tube in between was filled with energy, roiling around violently. It was colored black and a very familiar shade of crimson, but not exactly the same hue she knew.

Nestled in between those two items was a large glass cylinder. The

front of it was fogged over - Leafy could feel the cold that caused the fog from the doorway. A couple pipes protruding from the walls were connected to it. Leafy walked over to the cylinder and wiped off the condensation, pressing her face against the cold glass to get a look inside.

A medium-sized egg, decorated pink and with magenta zig-zags running all along the surface, was perched inside the cylinder. "Weird," Leafy muttered, before moving away and turning her attention to the filing cabinet instead. Maybe there was something in there that would help her.

She checked all the drawers, but only the bottom one had anything in it. Leafy pulled out a thick manila folder and began to skim the contents. "Math, math, taxes... fanfictions? Eugh. Oh!" She paused on a single sheet of paper. The title read, *Instructions on building Recovery Centers.* "This will be a good backup, just in case the HPRC ever gets destroyed."

Leafy stashed it away and kept looking, noting that the muted sounds from outside had mostly stopped. After another minute of rustling paper, she found what she was looking for. A small packet that explained the science behind the humans' elixir and the Extraneous Internalized Tract, but more importantly, the series of characters clearly labelled as the password in blue ink on the top page. "Perfect!"

She tucked away the packet and placed the folder back into the bottom drawer, carefully closing it. Her internal sense of time told her that it wasn't long before the potion wore off, so she quickly slid underneath the door again and almost ran straight into Seekayaitch. She froze, not daring to breathe for a moment, then slowly backed away and took in the scene in front of her.

8-Ball was dead, his glassy face completely shattered. Lightning was still unconscious on the floor, and Dora was frozen in a superman pose, a syringe sticking out of her forehead. Emwhyaitch had trapped Bracelety and was holding a large kitchen knife to her face. On the other hand, Bubble had Seekayaitch wrapped in a bear hug and was holding on tight, her Yoylemetal body preventing her from popping. They were at a standstill. Leafy noted with pride that other than Seekayaitch's slightly squished foot, the objects had avoided actually

hurting the humans majorly.

"Let go of her," Bubble growled in a low voice. Leafy couldn't remember ever seeing her so angry before, not even during their confrontation in the volcano all those years ago. There was a familiar look in Bubble's eyes that unsettled Leafy.

Emwhyaitch snorted. *What a coincidence. The same statement was on the tip of my tongue. Figuratively speaking.*

Seekayaitch struggled against Bubble's grip to no avail. She was strong now, but a few moments earlier, the human had felt her grip weaken temporarily. If it happened again, and if he timed his struggles correctly...

Put me down, Seekayaitch said. *Even if you beat us here, we'll just find you and capture you again, so you may as well give up now.*

"Maybe," Bubble admitted. "But if you're dead, then you can't be recovered, right?" She squeezed a little harder. "Then we wouldn't have to worry about you."

Leafy tensed. That wasn't in the plan, and that *definitely* wasn't like Bubble.

"DON'T DO IT, BUBBLE!" Bracelety pleaded. "LEAFY ASKED US NOT TO HURT THEM!"

Leafy? Emwhyaitch perked up. *Where is that lemony plant hiding?*

"In the city," Bubble lied. "You'll never find her."

"WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? LEAFY'S RIGHT THERE!" Bracelety pointed at where Leafy was standing, then immediately covered her mouth. "OOPS."

A sinking feeling settled in the pit of Leafy's 'stomach.' She looked down and saw her own feet. She had been so captivated by the object-human standoff that she failed to notice a crucial fact: her invisibility potion wore off.

Leafy?! both humans chimed in chorus. Bubble and Emwhyaitch

turned to look at the green gal, who was suddenly sweating nervously.

Moments ago, Bubble was seeing red, and her vision was gradually growing darker and darker. She was only vaguely aware of what she was saying and doing, but the surprise of seeing Leafy when she wasn't *supposed* to see Leafy brought a moment of clarity.

However, it was instantly swept away by another pulse of her intense headache. "Guh!" Bubble lost concentration and her grip loosened significantly, allowing Seekayaitch to break free. He pushed Bubble away, and she rolled across the floor, bonking the wall next to the main controls.

Emwhyaitch tossed Bracelety behind him and began to advance, knife glinting in his hand. *You've been a thorn in our side for far too long,* he 'growled.'

Leafy stepped backwards. "You only abducted me a couple hours ago-"

"THAT'S STILL TOO LONG!" Emwhyaitch roared out loud. He regained his composure quickly and cleared his throat. *Regardless of the time frame, I'm not going to let a little green brat ruin our plans for immortality.*

"Em, behind you!" Seekayaitch suddenly shouted. Em whirled around just in time for Bracelety to tackle him. C ran over to help, and Leafy briefly contemplated attacking him from behind, but Bubble beat her to it by whacking C in the back with a chair.

"Bubble!" Leafy cried happily, but anything that resembled joy drained from her as Bubble turned to look at her. Bubble's eyes were wide with dilated pupils, and her expression was one of pure hate. But Leafy didn't know just how much trouble she was in until she noticed that Bubble's metallic skin was now tinged scarlet. "You... you're evil!" Leafy cried again, distressed. "Oh, what has my corrupted counterpart *done* to you??"

Bubble took a step towards Leafy, but her focus changed when Seekayaitch groaned. She picked him up off the ground and hurled

him towards Emwhyaitch, who was still struggling against Bracelety. C crashed into the duo and knocked all three of them unconscious.

Leafy slowly inched towards the door that led to the rest of the ship, only making it a foot before Bubble swiveled towards her. Leafy froze in fright. She could only watch as Bubble made her way across the room. The leaf closed her eyes and waited for the inevitable.

The inevitable never arrived. Instead, there was simply a *ZAP!* Leafy cracked an eye open to witness Lightning electrocuting Bubble with all his might. He must have woken up earlier and seen what she just did.

"What are you doing?? Run!!" Lightning shouted, snapping Leafy out of her trance. She sprinted to the exit and fled, catching one more glimpse of Bubble slowly reaching out towards Lightning. The last thing she heard before the beating of her 'heart' filled her ears was the sound of metal being torn in half.

Evil Bubble looked around the now-quiet room. It was an absolute mess. Shards of glass and a few empty syringes of freeze juice were scattered all over the floor. The front window had a massive hole in it, but that was ok, because the ship was within Earth's atmosphere. In fact, it was quite close to the surface...

Bubble walked over to the control panel, which was somehow mostly intact. She raised her right hand, flexing her fingers into a fist, then punched the series of electronics with as much strength as she could muster. A second punch caused red warning lights all over the ship to begin flashing. Three more strategically-placed punches, and the job was done. The ship listed to one side, then started to slowly fall to Earth.

Leafy had just managed to find the room she and Fries were imprisoned in earlier that night when the ship tilting nearly caused her to fall over. *What's happening??* she thought frantically. Then she felt the whole vehicle begin to sink.

Putting two and two together and coming up with a very unpleasant four, she rushed into the room, which had looked mostly the same before the ship started moving. Thankfully, the box that everyone else was inside was still attached to the counter. But there was no time for her to free anyone. Leafy barely managed to get inside one of the cabinets and close the door before C and Em's UFO slammed straight into Yoyle City.

just wrote that entire thing in one day when I was supposed to be doing an actual essay for school... oh well ¯_(ツ)_/¯

See you in IDFB 14 :)

IDFB 14a: Trust Issues ✏

October 3rd, just past midnight

Emwhyaitch groaned and put his hand to his head. Why did he have such a massive headache? He should really stop working so hard every night and get to sleep earlier.

Then he noticed that he hurt all over, not just inside, and opened his eyes to find the wrecked bridge of his ship. Memories came flooding back all at once and he groaned again. *I really hate leaves.*

Seekayaitch! The thought of his brother jolted him awake, and he scrambled to his feet. He glanced downward and found Seekayaitch lying unconscious on the ground. Em lowered himself to his knees and checked C's chest. *There's a pulse.* Relief flooded through him, and he sat back down hard. Another glance told him that C hadn't sustained any new injuries from the crash, other than various cuts and bruises. He still had his left arm in a cast, though. With the immediate worry of his brother's life ebbing away, Em took a proper look around the control room.

8-Ball's body had utterly shattered from the impact, with black glass shards mixing with the regular glass on the floor. Half of Lightning's metal body was lodged in a wall (the other half was nowhere to be seen). The wall with the "no unauthorized personnel" door had a large crack in it, and something was leaking out of the entrance to the kitchen. Various metal pipes had fallen out of the ceiling and were littered on the floor. Em noted with yet more relief that a particularly large one had managed to impale Bubble's Yoylemetal body and killed her. Dora was still frozen in place, and Bracelety was dead on the floor behind Seekayaitch.

Scratch that last thing, Em thought as Bracelety murmured something in her sleep.

But a reminder of the objects which caused this whole mess filled him with a rage he had never felt before. Getting up, he stormed over to the smashed control panel and opened up a compartment underneath it. He pulled out something that was, fortunately for him, undamaged. A long-range communicator, capable of sending signals through trillions of miles of space.

Em turned it on and fiddled around with the controls until he located a nearby signal. "Hello," he spoke out loud into the microphone. "This is Emwhyaitch, requesting assistance immediately."

No response. For a scary moment, Em thought that the communicator *was* damaged after all. But then there was a loud beep, a small amount of static, and a voice coming through. "Jaybeedubleyoo to Aitchtwins. It's good to hear from you again, Emwhyaitch. What's your status?"

"Our ship has crashed on Earth due to hostiles in Yoyle City."

"Earth? Alright. What would you like us to do?"

Em didn't hesitate. "Send a neurotoxin bomb to end all life in the city."

There was a static-filled pause. "Are you-"

"YES!"

"If you insist. I assume you also need a ride?"

Em was about to answer when the communicator was smashed out of his hands by a steel pipe.

(cue IDFB intro lol)

Carefully, Leafy pushed against the cabinet door to open it, causing it to abruptly fall of its hinges. She slowly stepped out into the ruins of what was her temporary prison a mere few hours ago. *That was only a couple hours ago?* she thought wearily. *Feels like much longer.*

One of the corners of the room was completely gone, perhaps sheared off by a building. The wall directly next to the hole was crumpled up like a sheet of paper. A steel beam was sticking out of the floor and into the ceiling - or the other way around, Leafy couldn't tell - and the entire room itself was slightly tilted to the right. She glanced into the hole in the wall, seeing that the ground was about ten feet down.

Leafy turned to go to the Extraneous Internal Tract, but it wasn't attached to the counter anymore. Panicking, she swiveled her body around the room until she spotted it underneath the table she was restrained under earlier.

She grabbed the box and quickly inspected it. To her dismay, it was damaged by the ship crashing. The glass top was completely shattered, and so were about half the vials inside. Elixir was leaking everywhere. Leafy hoped it wasn't toxic. She tapped the screen and it turned on, but it was glitching pretty badly. Thankfully the interface was readable. However, a lot of the icons that represented the objects of Goiky were crossed out. She didn't know whether that meant they were dead or not.

But who to release first? she pondered. *It has to be someone who doesn't hate me, or is at least neutral with me, so that I can try to explain everything. That eliminates Golf Ball and the entire alliance. Firey's symbol is crossed out, but even if it wasn't, I'd wait since I still don't know what's going on with him. I don't even know some of the other objects here... maybe Pin? No, her icon is crossed out too.*

She eventually settled on Coiny and tapped his icon. A prompt appeared, asking for the password, and she pulled out the packet of papers to type it in. A few seconds later, Coiny materialized next to her in a flurry of purple particles. He sat up, looking extremely confused. "Uhhh... what's... going on?"

Leafy would have smiled had it not been for their situation. "Hi, Coiny."

Coiny sat up and looked around the ruined room. "Where are we? The last thing I remember was chasing after FreeSmart, then... everything turned purple?"

Leafy sighed as she realized that she would have to give another, even longer explanation. "There's a lot going on, but I'll try to summarize what you need to know right now. A bunch of people are trapped in this box-" she gestured to the device on the floor. "-and I know how to free them. That's where you were just now."

"How-"

"Hang on. I'm sure you have a lot of questions, but I don't want to explain everything until everyone's here. And since they likely won't listen to *me* because... you know... I need you to ask them to just wait a few minutes until I get everyone out. I promise I'll explain everything afterwards. Alright?"

Coiny hesitated. He quickly ran through everything in his mind and decided to give Leafy a chance, as he had before when he stopped caring about the BFDI finale. "Alright," he said after a tense moment. "I'll wait."

"Thank you." Leafy smiled inwardly and turned back to the box, perusing the list of intact icons. One by one, she released various objects, starting with the ones more likely to listen to Coiny about waiting. Golf Ball and Pencil were unsurprisingly tricky for him to convince, especially since GB seemed to be having some sort of mental breakdown.

But soon, everyone who's icon wasn't crossed out was free. Leafy set the box down on a counter and turned to face the crowd of 20 objects. Pencil, Match, Ruby, Book, and Emerald were all huddled together. Pencil and Match were glaring at Leafy. Tennis Ball was trying to calm Golf Ball down, but she wouldn't stop murmuring things to herself under her breath. Pillow and Needle were eyeing the duo from across the room. Gelatin and Coiny stood next to Fries, who was hugging Puffball. Nickel was standing far away from Coiny. Balloony was leaning against Cloudy, looking a little agitated, and Donut was tapping his foot on the floor impatiently. Pie was glancing between Nickel, Gelatin, and Leafy, while Naily was simply sitting on the floor and waiting. Finally, Roboty was perched behind everyone else, not moving. His eyes were glowing green, and the glow was slowly fading in and out.

"Well?" Pencil insisted. "Care to actually tell us what's going on?"

"Yeah, like, where the heck are we?" Nickel agreed.

Collecting her thoughts, Leafy took a deep breath and did her best to explain everything for the second time that night, plus everything that had happened since her last explanation. When she finished, Match just snorted derisively. "What an absurd, like, fairy tale," she said.

"Yeah," Pencil agreed. She turned to the others. "Do you really think we can trust this leaf, after what she's done?"

"What *has* she done that's so bad?" Pillow asked curiously. "From my point of view, she's just done something good - freed us all from that weird device."

"What Leafy's done in the past isn't important right now," Coiny said before Pencil could continue. "I believe her. What matters right now-"

"But why do *you,* like, believe her?" Match asked.

"Because I've decided to give her another chance."

Book spoke up. "Match, Pencil - it would explain why everyone said we disappeared for a month when we thought we didn't. If the humans really erased our memory, I mean."

"Are you taking her side?"

"No, I'm just trying to-"

"It's true."

Book and Pencil stopped. Everyone turned to look at Golf Ball, who wouldn't meet anyone's eyes. "The humans. They are real. And I do not mean David and Dora - Seekayaitch and Emwhyaitch."

"You know, you haven't been very reliable in the past, either," Pencil pointed out. "I don't think I trust you *or* Leafy."

"Believe me, I do not trust you, either," Golf Ball growled. "And do

not get me wrong - I still do not trust Leafy. But I know for a fact that the humans are here, that this is their ship, and that they do not have good intentions." The dimpled scientist turned to the lemon leaf. "Is there a third human aboard?"

Leafy frowned. "I don't think so. Seekayaitch only ever mentioned his brother, the Em person, but never anything about a third one. Why?"

Golf Ball *hmmed* and returned to her thoughts.

Leafy looked back at Pencil. "If you don't believe me, then follow me to the bridge of this ship. The humans are there. You can also ask Fries - he was abducted earlier tonight, too."

Fries nodded as Leafy left the room, then exited after her. Coiny followed immediately as well. Balloony and Cloudy exchanged uncertain glances, before Cloudy decided to follow. Eventually, nearly everyone left the room to see where Leafy was going, reluctantly or willingly.

Just as Balloony stepped out himself, he heard a quiet noise behind him and paused. *That's odd. Wasn't I the last one out of the room?*

Cautiously, he poked his head through the doorframe and saw a strange sight. What appeared to be a large, blue, anthropomorphic version of the number four was standing in the middle of the room. It was holding the human's elixir device in its hands.

It seemed to have not noticed Balloony yet. He watched in wonder as the number muttered to itself, "Extraneous Internalized Tract? Foolish." The numeral pulled out a red marker and wrote new words on the screen. Balloony could only just make them out from where he was standing. *Eternal Xalgebra IClass TwithFour? That makes no sense.*

Four chuckled to himself. "Perfect. Now I just have to fix the EXIT and I will be set!"

"The EXIT?" Balloony accidentally asked out loud.

Four stiffened. Balloony blinked in surprise at himself, and during the second that his eyes were closed, the navy blue digit had disappeared. He simply blinked again, then rubbed his eyes, unsure if

he was hallucinating or not.

Hearing voices, Leafy tip-toed over to the entrance to the bridge and peeked inside. One of the humans - she thinks it's Emwhyaitch - is speaking into some sort of microphone. She glanced around the room, quickly taking everything in before returning her attention to the human just in time to hear him say, "-a neurotoxin bomb to end all life in the city."

Leafy gasped, then covered her mouth, but Emwhyaitch didn't seem to hear. Acting fast, she grabbed a pipe from the floor, charged towards Em, and smacked the machine right out of his hands. It slammed against the floor and broke apart into several pieces.

Em whirled around, stumbled backwards in surprise, tripped over the control panel, and fell through where the glass wall was once. Leafy winced as she saw him land hard in the middle of Fries' farm. It was only a four-foot drop, but that still had to have hurt.

"It's really true," someone said from behind her. Leafy turned to see Pencil gaping at Seekayaitch lying on the ground. "I can't believe it."

The other objects began to fill the room. Seekayaitch stirred and Golf Ball froze in fear. "Does anyone have any rope, or anything?" Leafy asked the crowd.

"I do!" a voice piped up. Emerald pushed her way to the front of the crowd with a loop of rope and quickly tied up Seekayaitch, even though his left hand was broken. "Thanks," Leafy said.

Seekayaitch groaned, then jerked awake suddenly. "Wh? Who? What's going on?" He struggled against his bonds futilely, then noticed the twenty or so objects staring at him. "Why am I- what?"

"You're tied up so that you can't cause any more trouble." Leafy crossed her arms, still holding the pipe. "And I need an answer or two."

"Like I-" Seekayaitch began to snarl, then paused. *Like I would tell you anything,* he repeated in her mind. From the startled murmurs of the

objects around her, Leafy figured the human had broadcasted that thought to everyone.

Fries and Coiny glanced at each other nervously as they noticed Leafy begin to shake, ever so sightly. "Leafy?" Fries asked tentatively.

A slow boil of anger bubbled up inside the lemon leaf. She slammed her metal pipe into the floor without warning, causing all the objects to jump and Seekayaitch to flinch. "Listen here, *C."* She spat out his nickname like it was rotten. "I'm DONE being the stereotypical nice girl. I was banished to Yoyleland for close to five years. I had to live *alone,* eating nothing but Yoyleberries because nobody liked me anymore. Then in the last few hours, I was attacked, captured, put under the threat of death and *torture,* and just watched someone I consider a friend get possessed by my own evil doppelganger." Seekayaitch's eyes widened. "At least half of those things are your fault. So the LEAST you can do is ANSWER MY *QUESTIONS."*

A stunned silence followed, the space filled only by Leafy's heavy breathing. C and the other objects stared at her with various emotions displayed on their faces, some showing fear, others showing a new respect for the angry plant, and more.

Leafy glared into C's eyes, and C looked right back, not saying a word. Then Leafy lifted her pipe off the ground slightly and he yelped. "Alright, alright! I'll- I'll tell you anything you want!"

Inwardly, Leafy breathed a sigh of relief. Despite her sudden outburst, she was almost sure she wouldn't actually be able to bring herself to hurt someone.

Almost.

the leaf has finally snapped

this might be a three-parter but we'll see

IDFB 14b: The Memory Void ✕

"Get up," Leafy demanded. Seekayaitch quickly scrambled to his feet and nearly fell over due to his arms being tied at his side.

Leafy turned to the other objects. "Come on. Let's get out of this spaceship."

"Where are we going?" Donut questioned, a little suspiciously.

"To the HPRC. We need to recover everyone else and get out of this city."

"Why?" Coiny wondered. "Back when you freed Firey from atop the Yoyle Needy, you gave me that same warning. But now that we've overpowered this human here..." He gestured to Seekayaitch. "What's the danger?"

Leafy's frown grew deeper. "Well, for one thing, there's his brother. He fell out this main window here, but now he's vanished, so we'll have to find them."

"One measly human against some twenty-odd objects?" Gelatin scoffed. "He stands no chance!"

"There's more." Leafy picked up the ruins of Emwhyaitch's long-range communication device. "The other human-"

Emwhyaitch, Seekayaitch interrupted.

Leafy glared at him. *"Emwhyaitch...* was talking on this radio thing, I think to other humans in space. And he told them to drop some kind of neurotoxin bomb on the city." She didn't know what neurotoxin was, but anything related to a bomb couldn't be good.

Gelatin's smile wavered. "Ok. Neurotoxin is *definitely* bad."

".. / -.-. .- -. / ... . -. ... . / .- -. --- - .... . .-. / ... .--. .- -.-. . ...--. / .-- .. - .... .. -. / - .... . / ... --- .-.. .- .-. / ... -.-- ... - . -- --..-- (I can sense another spaceship within the solar system,)" Roboty beeped. ".. - / .. ... / --. . - - .. -. --. / -.-. .-.. --- ... . .-. .-.-.- (It is getting closer.)"

Several people stared at him. "Does anybody even know what he's saying?" Pie asked.

"I understand Morse code," Golf Ball replied. She translated his message out loud and a few objects gulped. "How close, Roboty?"

".. / . ... - .. -- .- - . / - ....-. / ... .--. / .-- .. .-.. .-.. / -... . / .-- .. - .... .. -. / - .... . / .- - -- --- ... .--. .... . .-. . / .. -. / .- .--. .--. .-. --- -..- .. -- .- - . .-.. -.-- / - .-- --- / .... --- ..- .-. ... --..-- / .--. --- ... . -... .-.. -.-- / ... --- --- -. . .-. .-.-.- (I estimate their ship will be within the atmosphere in approximately two hours, possibly sooner.)"

"Oh dear. We don't have much time." Golf Ball straightened. "I hate to say this, but Leafy is right. We must get away from this location as soon as possible."

"But where-"

"Let's just go already, alright?" Leafy interrupted Nickel. "As they said, we don't have much time."

With that, she hopped out the ship's broken windshield without waiting for anyone. Almost immediately after, her head popped back in. "Someone grab Dora, Bracelety, and the human, please."

The half-hour walk to the Hand-Powered Recovery Center was spent mostly in silence. The waxing gibbous moon illuminated the one human and twenty-three objects as they walked, floated, or were carried along to the east and away from the burning spaceship. Pencil looked angry when she saw that the Yoyle Needle had been destroyed by the UFO's crash, and decided to use that anger as an excuse to lash out at Seekayaitch if he tried to escape. He didn't.

In the last ten minutes, Leafy finally decided to stop pondering the night's events and actually get some information. She slowed her

walk slightly until she was next to Pencil and Seekayaitch.

C glanced at her and sighed. *What do you want to know?* he asked.

"I want to know what you did to Bubble."

C looked at her in confusion. *What do you mean?*

"Are you talking about when you guys attacked them earlier, before the ship crashed?" Pencil wondered.

"Yeah." Leafy sighed. She was getting really tired of explaining things. "Seekayaitch, do you remember being thrown across the room?"

He winced. *It's sort of hard to forget something like that.*

"That was Bubble. She somehow got possessed by Evil Me. And since you *created* both Bubble and I, you probably know more about my demonic doppelganger than I do."

C just stared at her for a second before realization dawned on his face. He sighed. *Oh, dear. I was wondering how long it would take.*

"'It?'"

Ruby and Emerald sidled up next to Leafy. "May we butt in?" Emerald asked.

"Bubble told us that she's been feeling sorta lousy recently," Ruby continued without waiting for an answer. "Headaches and stuff. She also mentioned something called the 'dead zone.'"

"The dead zone?" Suddenly, Golf Ball and Tennis Ball were walking next to them as well. "She told you about it?"

"This pack's really growing," Pencil muttered to herself.

Leafy pointed at Seekayaitch. "Back to the point. What did you do, or at least, what do you know?"

C glanced at each of them in turn before answering. *I might as well explain everything from when we first arrived back at Earth last year. I'm*

about to dump a lot of information on you all, so be warned.

When my brother and I came up with the initial idea of recovery for the original 20 objects, we realized that we needed a way to store your thoughts, your personalities, your memories - everything that makes you unique - somewhere. Recreating something such as, say, a slab of balsa wood was simple, but without one's memories, every time that slab of wood died and was recreated, it would be like it was an entirely new being. So we created what you call the dead zone, but what we call the "memory void."

Similar to the Extraneous Internalized Tract, it is its own dimension, except that this one is entirely separate from our dimension. When an object dies, their memories are transferred to the memory void and stored there until they are recovered. The unique properties of the void doesn't allow the object to remember anything that actually happens between death and recovery, ironically enough. This entire process, for reasons we couldn't figure out, doesn't work on humans.

Any recovery centers created up to the HPRC function in this way. After we gave the Firey Speaker Box the HPRC, we came up with a new, much more efficient way to recover objects and stopped using the memory void. But during BFDIA 5, we had to leave for some urgent things back on the planet we were born on. We decided that the FSB could handle things on his own for a while, and if he couldn't, you guys would naturally find another host. Looks like we were wrong. And we don't know what happened to the FSB either, before you ask. So, you all just continued to use the HPRC.

Our business lasted much longer than we expected, and when we eventually finished, we didn't really care about BFDI as a whole anymore. But back in the beginning of October last year, we received a signal from the Yoyle City Science Museum. We traveled to Earth and, to our surprise, found that most of FreeSmart - minus Match - had inadvertently activated the museum's hidden systems, cameras included. Before long, they stumbled across an old teleportation pad that would transport anyone who stood on it and activated it to our ship. We had been in the museum years before that for an experiment and left it there by accident. Seekayaitch paused in his monologue and turned to look at Golf Ball. *It was* your *experiment.*

GB stiffened and inched away from the human.

"Her experiment?" Tennis Ball wondered, remembering how Golf Ball reacted when absorbing Rocky's memories of the humans earlier that night. "...what did you *do* to her?"

"I- I'll tell you later," GB mumbled just loud enough for TB, and only TB, to hear.

C continued. *Anyhow, Pencil, Ice Cube, and Book used the pad to enter our ship, later joined by Match, Needle, and Rocky. Ruby stayed behind to man the controls. Eventually, Emwhyaitch and I introduced ourselves and showed them around the ship. I let it slip that we had created the original 20 contestants and they fought back, so we restrained them and removed their memories of us and going to the museum in the first place. Well, except for Rocky. Our technology didn't work on him for some reason.*

Pillow, who was now listening to the conversation, decided not to mention that she was the reason.

While much of humanity's technology nowadays is very advanced, my brother and I had an outdated mind-wiping machine, and it took a full month for the process to complete. We also planted an inclination to avoid the science museum in their minds, so that they would not stumble upon the teleportation pad again.

Those memories of theirs are now locked away in the memory void. It was the first time we had used the dimension in quite a while, and after successfully storing the memories, we noticed something odd about the void and looked further. It was then that we discovered what was really happening in there.

"Oh, so we're finally getting to the point?" Pencil asked sarcastically.

Yes, actually, and it's quite an important one, so I would appreciate it if you didn't interrupt me again. You see, we did create you, and Leafy, and the other 18 contestants from BFDI. But in a way, we also created Evil Leafy. It was more of an accident than anything, through a failed experiment. Even we're still not sure exactly what *she is.*

However, she escaped to Earth. We didn't worry too much about it, especially after the Announcer locked her in the Locker Of Losers in BFDI 18. But she just escaped again, and did the same once more during BFDIA 1. All you BFDIA contestants know that she used to roam the Evil Forest in South Goiky, before Book and Ruby crushed her with a 9,042 kilogram weight.

And so... she was sent to the dead zone. But not as a full consciousness.

This is what my brother and I discovered. Since she died, Evil Leafy has been gathering her awareness back together, in the memory void. Recently - we estimate it was around the time we arrived - she is more or less "whole" again, albeit without a physical body. She was weak when she reformed, but grew stronger and stronger as time went by. She... Seekayaitch faltered. *Even now, when I've known this for nearly a year, it still sounds crazy. But Evil Leafy has actually managed to* infect *the memory void. It's under her control now, and there's very little we can do about it.*

With an air of finality, C shook his head and stared Leafy dead in the eyes. *That's what happened to Bubble. Being so fragile, she died constantly and spent far, far more time in the memory void over the past 3 years then any of you COMBINED, and this allowed two things. Not only did she begin to remember little snippets of the void, but Evil Leafy gained power over her mind.*

When C stopped 'talking,' the silence was deafening. He had been broadcasting his story to all the objects there, and now everyone was quiet as they absorbed the second ludicrously-sized chunk of information of the night.

Bracelety chose that time to wake up. She stirred and slipped off of Naily's back, where she was lying. Rubbing her face, she stood up and looked around confused. "HOW DID I GET HERE?"

Seekayaitch stared at her. *Please don't tell me I have to explain all that again.*

"That won't be necessary." Leafy sighed as she went over what C said in her head, then turned back to him. "You said there's very little that we can do about this situation. Is there *anything* we can do?"

C glared. *Why should I keep helping you? I've already told you so much that-*

Leafy raised her steel pipe.

C gulped. *Right. Well, I can think of three things you'll have to do if you really want to get things back to "normal." One, the HPRC is no longer a recovery option. Now that Bubble is fully infected, it's likely that Evil Leafy has managed to corrupt the rest of the machine, and anyone else recovered from it would be corrupted as well. You'll need to build new recovery centers using our more recent method. But the notes with instructions on how to build those are back at the ship, in a-*

The lemon leaf pulled out a single sheet of paper. "You mean *these* instructions?"

Of course you stole them. C gritted his teeth. *Nevertheless, you'll need to go back to the ship anyway, to destroy the machine that actually connects the memory void to our dimension. If you've been in the room where those instructions were, then surely you must know of the device I'm talking about.*

Leafy remembered a glass tube, crackling with black and red energy, trapped between two Tesla coils. "Sounds easy enough. And the third thing?"

As the HPRC is now also probably infected, you'll need to destroy that too. If the HPRC and the void machine are both destroyed, then any regular recovery centers you build for objects should work perfectly fine.

A small knot of tension unraveled in most of the objects. After everything that had happened, it was a great relief to hear that things may be able to go back to normal. But...

"WAIT!" a voice called out from the crowd. Everyone turned to look at Needle, who just spoke up. "What about everyone in the Locker Of Losers? We can't just leave them there!"

"Shoot, you're right." Leafy ran her hands down her face. Just another thing to be worried about.

Golf Ball began to pace. "We can figure this out." She was starting to

sound like her old self again. "Roboty, how long until the other human's ship reaches us?"

".- / .-.. .. - - .-.. . / --- ...- . .-. / .- -. / .... --- ..- .-. .-.-.-"

"A little over an hour," GB muttered to herself. "Someone needs to go back to the ship and destroy whatever's linking the dead zone to us. The HPRC also needs to be destroyed, and the LOL needs to be transported to wherever we're going."

"Why can't we just break down the walls of the LOL?" Ruby questioned.

Cloudy answered. "If that box is Black Hole-proof, I don't think we *can* break down the walls. Otherwise, we would all have been free years ago!"

As GB paced and pondered, Emerald slid up to Pillow. "Psst. Pillow."

"Hmm?"

"I think I know a way to get everyone out of the LOL."

Pillow was suddenly interested. "Really?"

"Yeah. Remember that advanced teleporter that One had you use to get the DND game board into the LOL?"

"Yes I- *hold on."* Pillow looked at her. "How do you know about One?"

Emerald held up her phone. "I've been watching the episodes, and it showed everything you two did. Thanks for helping out Ruby in the museum, by the way."

"Thanks, I guess. But what's your point? One took that machine with him after they disappeared."

"That's the thing. They didn't." Emerald turned on her phone, opened up episode 12, and paused on a shot of the HPRC near the beginning. Peeking out behind it was a familiar-looking beige-colored knapsack. "One must have left it there after leaving you. GB, TB, Rocky, and you all missed it."

Pillow caught on. "And if the backpack's still there, with the teleporter inside, then we can use it to free the others!"

"Yeah!"

Pillow turned and walked over to Golf Ball. "Golf Ball, I-"

"Hold on, Pillow! I think I know what we have to do now."

"But-"

"Shush! I have to concentrate!"

Before Pillow could say anything else, GB turned to everyone else. "Listen up, people! I believe I have a plan!" Pillow took a step back and decided to wait until later. "The best course of action would be to head back to the original competing grounds. It is far away from here, and a location that many of us are familiar with. Down by the shore, there is a large, flat boat in which we can put the LOL to transport it across the ocean. But we have only about an hour left. In order to escape in minimal possible time, we must temporarily split up." GB looked at Seekayaitch. "How hard would it be to destroy the void machine?"

Not hard at all, C answered. *All you would really have to do is shatter the glass tube.*

"Great, so anyone with arms can easily break it. Who would like to volunteer?"

Book raised her hand. "I'll do it."

GB nodded. "Someone else should probably go with you just in case Seekayaitch's brother shows up."

"Me! Me! Meeeeeeeeeee!!!" Ruby said excitedly.

"Alright. Onto the next problem: destroying the HPRC. As it is made out of metal, it would be considerably harder to get rid of."

"Not necessarily," TB butted in. "As long as we simply disable it, make it unusable, then that would work. Right?"

C stayed silent.

"Right?" Tennis Ball prompted again

The human sighed. *Theoretically.*

Golf Ball sighed as well. "If we weren't low on time, I would say that we should completely destroy it, but I suppose disabling it would have to do. Naily, you're the sharpest thing here. Do you think you can pierce the HPRC's outer layer?"

"Easily!" Naily replied confidently.

Emerald and Pillow raised their hands. "We'll go with her."

"Good. Remember, no recovering. The last problem is actually moving the Locker Of Losers. The best thing to do would have Puffball grow to an adequate size and-"

"I can't."

"You what?"

"I can't grow anymore." Puffball's voice wavered. "Or shrink. Or change size at all. I think something about the elixir thing we were all trapped inside... changed me."

"This complicates things." GB *hmmed*, and her eyes began to dart around at the crowd. "Although... we probably have enough people here to lift up the LOL with combined strength. If Book and Ruby are heading towards the ship, and Pillow, Emerald, and Naily are going to the HPRC..." She ran some quick calculations. "That leaves eleven people with arms - since Dora is still frozen - and two fliers to carry it. It's a large box, but I believe it can be done."

".. / .... .- ...- . / .-. --- -.-. -.- . - / -... --- --- ... - . .-. ... .-.-.- (I have rocket boosters.)"

"Eleven people with arms and three fliers," GB corrected. "That will definitely be enough."

"What about me?" Nickel asked.

"You can come down to the shore with Seekayaitch, Tennis Ball, and I to make sure the boat is still working."

"Neat."

Leafy stepped forwards. "If you don't mind, I'd like to come with you guys, too, if you're taking the human. I don't trust him and want to keep an eye on him."

"If you did that, then there would only be ten people with arms to-"

"It was always going to be ten. Someone needs to carry Dora, and I can do that *and* watch Seekayaitch at the same time."

"Finally!" Donut, who had lugged Dora's frozen, unconscious body all the way over from the ship, dropped her unceremoniously on the ground. "She's heavy. My arms feel like noodles."

Golf Ball grunted. "Fine, I suppose..." She looked around. "Does everyone know what they're doing?" All the objects nodded. "Perfect. Everyone meet back at the shore in fifty minutes, or we'll leave you behind and recover you later. Let's get back to South Goiky, people!"

"That's a bad idea," a new voice announced from behind her.

Everyone but Needle gasped in surprise. GB whirled around to see Flower standing there, dripping wet. She was holding the top half of an axe and wearing a battered, but (barely) intact backpack. The plant angrily threw down her weapon, breathing heavily. "Don't go in the ocean," Flower warned. "There. Are. Fish. Monsters. EVERYWHERE."

Then she collapsed.

FLOWER HAS RETURNED

all hail the floral queen (I hope she wins BFB but I wouldn't be fussed if Gelatin or TD won [I say Gelatin or TD cause I don't know the BFB 29 elimination results yet])

and yes this is a three-parter

edit: just checked and this is the longest chapter I've ever posted for any of my stories! and I wrote most of it in 2 days lmao (just goes to show how weird motivation can be)

IDFB 14c: Bombs Away 💣

Everyone stared at Flower for a moment, not saying a word or moving to help her.

"Drat," Golf Ball finally cursed. "I can't believe I forgot about the fish monster's annual migrating season!"

Match questioned, "The whatso?

Pencil turned to her. "You see, Match, at about this time every year, the fish monsters in the ocean migrate to the Yoyle coastline and go crazy there for about a month or two. We tried getting past them once, but they just eat anything they see. It's basically a wall of stark raving madness!"

"An *impenetrable* wall of stark raving madness," GB muttered. "There's no getting past them. Our boat is probably destroyed by now, anyway." She turned to TB. "I was hoping we could keep the other location a secret, but now I guess we don't have a choice."

"Other location?" Fries wondered.

Tennis Ball looked at the other objects. "About eight months ago, Golf Ball and I relocated her underground factory to a place about an hour and a half's walk east of here. It's a grassy plain, very similar to the one we competed in down in South Goiky, but there's also a lovely forest with golden trees nearby, as well as a small building and patio."

"OOOOOOOHHH!!" Puffball gushed. "GOLDEN trees???"

Golf Ball sighed. "No, they're not actually made of gold - they're just colored that way. But I believe that it is a suitable place to relocate, at least for now." She began to pace again. "We're running out of time and need to think of a new plan. Even between the 24 of us - 23 since

Dora is *still* frozen - I'm not sure we can carry the LOL for an hour and a half." She was starting to wear a circle in the ground with all her pacing.

Book glanced at Ruby. "Hey, what about that box?"

"Huh?"

"The box we found in the science museum. The one that can fit anything inside it," Book clarified.

"Oh yeah! Pencil has it right now, and she's using it to store the FreeSmart Supervan."

Pencil overheard what they said. "No, no, no, Book! I'm not taking out the Supervan!"

"Pencil, come on. This is bigger than us. We can't just leave the rest of the objects trapped in there!" Book countered. "And we can use the Supervan to drive away from the city much faster than we could walk!"

Pencil just crossed her arms and pouted. It would have been almost funny in a lighter situation. Book kept going. "Unless you want to carry the LOL several miles...?"

Pencil glanced over to Match, who just shrugged. "Fiiiiiiiiiiine," Pencil relented. She pulled out the small wooden box. "Everyone step back."

Everyone stepped back. Pencil gingerly opened the box and the FreeSmart Supervan whirled out, landing on the ground and almost crushing Gelatin in the process.

Golf Ball stopped. "Where did that- never mind. At least we have easy transport to the golden forest."

"There's something else, too." Pencil reluctantly showed Golf Ball her box and explained how it worked.

"This is perfect!" GB was almost ecstatic. "Who's the fastest runner here?"

"Probably me." Needle.

"Alright, everyone. New plan. Needy-" **slap** "-and Puffball will go over to the LOL and use Pencil's box to transport it. Puffball, be ready to fly Needle out of danger in case the other human shows up. Book and Ruby will stick to their original plan. Everyone else, let's keep going to the HPRC to destroy it. It's at the eastern most side of the city anyway, and we're heading east, so it's simply more convenient. Pencil, how many people can your van fit?"

Pencil put her hand to her 'chin.' *"Super*van, and there's five seats in there. Two people usually sit in the back one, but I suppose we could fit four in it. So that's eight people. But we have a large trunk, and there's probably enough room on the floor that we could probably have..." She paused. "Nineteen people. That's really pushing it, but we can probably fit nineteen people in the van."

"Hmm. We have twenty-four objects..."

"I can fly and carry Balloony," Cloudy offered.

"Yeah!" Puffball agreed. "I can take Fries!"

"-.. --- -. .----. - / ..-. --- .-. --. . - / - .... .- - / .. / .... .- ...- . / .-. --- -.-. -.- . - / -... --- --- ... - . .-. ... .-.-.- (Don't forget that I have rocket boosters.)"

"Excellent. Then everyone else can get in the van. Again, though, we don't have much time. Book, Ruby, Needle, and Puffball - get back to the HPRC in the next fifty minutes. Or else." They all nodded at GB. "Let's move, people!"

Needle grabbed the wooden box from Pencil and dashed off westwards. Puffball, Ruby, and Book trailed behind. Leafy picked up Dora and pushed her into the back of the van, then did the same with Flower, as she was still unconscious. Something slipped out of Flower's backpack in the process.

"Hey, check this out!" Coiny picked up the familiar orange device. "It's Firey's Speaker Box!"

Fries came over. "Huh. So Flower was the one who had it all this time?"

Coiny turned it over, revealing that the back panel had been opened. "I guess she deactivated it - looks like a bunch of wires were pulled out. It's useless now." Coiny carelessly tossed it behind him and Donut managed to catch it. The pastry inspected the box, then stashed it away for later use.

As Pencil climbed into the front seat to make sure everything was working, Golf Ball and Tennis Ball walked towards Seekayaitch. Pillow intercepted them. "Golf Ball, I-"

"Not. Now." GB hissed. Pillow just shrugged and decided to wait yet again.

Seekayaitch looked up when he heard the globules coming and sighed out loud. *I suppose you want to know about your experiment?*

Golf Ball looked around surreptitiously, but nobody else seemed to react to the human. He had projected his words into only GB's and TB's minds. "Yes, I do. I already rem-" She shook slightly as she thought about her past. "I already remember what happened, but... I want- I want to know about the third human. And *why* she..." GB couldn't even finish her sentence.

C glanced at Leafy, who was standing nearby. *I suppose I don't really have a choice, do I?*

"Nope."

Very well. Her name was Essaitch. Despite our similar names, she was not related to Emwhyaitch and I - she was simply a close friend. Close enough that when my brother and I discovered how to make inanimate objects animate, we asked her to help us eventually create BFDI. She agreed.

I must make something clear. Back then, we had no intention of harming you twenty in any way. We experimented on you all the time, but that was purely to gather data, and we never actually hurt any of you. Nowadays, of course, we don't care. I just brought that up because Essaitch showed signs of... breaking, which we did not notice until it was too late.

More context is needed for the next part. Remember how I said Evil Leafy

was a failed experiment? Well, she wasn't the first version. We tried inventing a serum that would separate an object into two forms - a good side and a bad side - and we did, but we didn't use it on anyone because we were conflicted. Should we use it, in the name of science? Or should we leave it, in the off chance that it would hurt one of you?

One day, my brother and I needed to leave to get more supplies, so we decided that Essaitch could take you down to the Yoyle City Science Museum and give you a history lesson. We didn't know she had taken the serum with her. She injected you with it, and... well, the rest is history.

Tennis Ball glanced at Golf Ball, who was still. "I don't know everything," GB whispered. "I very clearly remember running through the museum, looking for somewhere to hide, but the rest is fuzzy."

Then I'll explain the rest again, including what you already know, unless you've told Tennis Ball. C gave her a moment to object. She didn't. *As it turns out, the serum was incomplete. It was supposed to split your physical form... but it split your mind instead. One side inherited your worst traits - everyone has the potential for absolute hatred inside them. The other side got everything else. Although, it's not without anger or hatred - the alternate side just amplifies that specific emotion to an extreme. From what I know, I believe that your "evil" side comes out in times of extreme distress, or when you are reminded of its origin.*

Both spheres were stunned. "I'm basically a... beta version of Evil Leafy?" GB mumbled to herself.

More or less. Do you still wish to hear the rest?

Golf Ball nodded.

When your "evil" side came through, Essaitch was fascinated. Right up until the point that you attacked her. You didn't do much damage, but she became furious. At some point, I suppose your normal self returned and you ran. You know how well that turned out.

Back then, you were just a ping-pong ball. After that incident, we tried transferring your memories over to what you are now - a golf ball. We locked all memories of Essaitch from your mind, hoping that you would never remember. And it worked, until that day you entered the museum

again.

We tried creating the serum again, but with a new purpose. After realizing what exactly happened, we hoped that we could perfect it and use it to entirely remove any negative emotions from an object. As I'm sure you've guessed, the next test subject was Leafy. And as I told you before, it didn't exactly work.

Tennis Ball forced himself to sit down before he fell over on his own. Golf Ball followed his example as the two tried to process everything.

"One more question," Golf Ball said after a moment. "What... happened to Essaitch?"

Seekayaitch's expression didn't change. *When we learned that she injected you with the serum, and what she did afterwards... was when we realized that she wasn't right anymore. We reacted in a way we normally wouldn't have at the time.*

He paused. *I mentioned earlier that the entire concept of the memory void, for whatever reason, would not work on humans.* C chuckled. *Well, to figure that out, we needed a test subject.*

GB and TB stared at him in stunned silence. "You killed her... and she isn't able to come back?" Tennis Ball asked.

Correct. Afterwards, we quickly realized what we had done and were filled with grief for the longest time. But now, we can see that it was necessary to further progress in our studies. In the name of science. I would do it again in a heartbeat if needed.

For the first time, Golf Ball looked into C's eyes - *truly* looked, rather than just taking a cursory glance - and noticed the core of madness that had somehow taken over this human, hidden behind a thin veneer of intelligence and fake politeness. She stepped back, horrified. "You really are crazy."

He shrugged. *Perhaps.*

GB took another step back, then turned and briskly walked away. TB sighed and looked up. Leafy, who had watched the whole exchange but opted to stay quiet, met his eyes, and gestured over to GB. "I'm

not entirely sure what just happened, but you should probably go talk to her."

TB nodded.

Twenty minutes of speed walking brought Book and Ruby back to Fries' farm, the spaceship, and where the Yoyle Needy used to stand. Needle and Puffball were way ahead of them - Book wouldn't be surprised if they had already reached the LOL.

They climbed through into the bridge and looked around. Ruby pointed to a room marked 'NO UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ALLOWED.' "That looks important!"

"I hope it's the right room," Book agreed. "We don't really have time to look around the whole UFO." Careful not to step on any glass shards, she stepped up to the door and pushed it open. The wall around it was damaged enough that the lock didn't work anymore.

Surprisingly, the inside of the room was mostly intact. The only change from when Leafy had been in there was that the cryogenic chamber was detached from the wall and leaning against what they assumed to be the void machine. Book noticed with a start that the cryo-chamber had actually caused the glass tube on the void machine to crack, and red tendrils of energy were penetrating the cold surface, reaching for whatever was inside.

Without saying anything, Ruby handed Book a steel pipe she picked up off the floor. Book stepped forward, hefted the pipe into the air, and brought it down upon the glass with as much force as she could muster.

Crash! The tube shattered into a thousand pieces and glass flew everywhere, many bits hitting both Ruby and Book but none of them doing any real damage. The electrical strands of red and black energy emitting from the Tesla coils swiftly dissipated, and the constant humming coming from the machine stopped abruptly.

Then, as the dead zone's connection to their dimension was cut, any

memories that occurred during death returned.

Needle stared at the Locker Of Losers as she pulled out Pencil's wooden box. "So, how does this thing work?"

"I don't know," Puffball admitted. "Maybe try touching it?"

Needle shrugged and pressed the silver clasp of the box against the LOL. Instantly, it shrank down and flew into the box, which snapped shut automatically. "Awesome!"

"Woohoo!" Puffball sang. "Let's head back!"

Needle stashed away the container and took a step forwards, then suddenly collapsed to her knees. "Ahhg!!"

"Needy? What happened?"

Needle shivered for a few moments. "I'm... alright. I just... I think Book and Ruby destroyed the void machine. I just got a lot of memories that I don't even remember experiencing..." She shuddered again. "The void was so empty..."

Pencil leaned against the side of the van and stared at the large hole Naily punctured in the HPRC, which revealed a whole mess of yanked-out wires and disassembled gears. Now that that was done, everyone was just sitting around, waiting for the other four objects to complete their missions and return. Tennis Ball and Golf Ball had been silent after privately talking with the human for a while. Leafy was still next to Seekayaitch, leaning against her steel pipe like a cane. Pillow was sporting a brand new backpack - where she got it, Pencil couldn't guess, and didn't really care. Some people were already in the van, but most others were just milling around.

Pencil suddenly remembered entering the science museum, being transported up to the humans' ship, discovering her origins, and being trapped in a chair. *What the heck?? Where did those memories come from?*

Out of nowhere, the memories of her 'alternate self' - that being the manifestation of the memories Emwhyaitch locked away in the void - returned to her. She slid to the ground as *eleven months'* worth of staring into darkness, punctuated only by talking to Match, Book, Needle, and Ice Cube, all of which who were there with her. Bubble was there for quite a lot of time, too, and Golf Ball and Tennis Ball became constant presences later.

Pencil could hear sounds of confusion come from some of the others as they remembered various times they had died over the past few years and been in the void themselves. She came to the conclusion that Book and Ruby had managed to destroy the void device.

Shakily, Pencil got up, walked over to where Match was lying on the ground, and joined her. They lay in silence for a moment before Pencil finally said, "That was weird."

"Yeah," Match agreed. They didn't say anything else for several minutes. Until...

"HE'S GONE?!"

Match groaned. "What, like, now?"

The duo sat up and glanced over at Golf Ball, the one who had just made that unholy screech. She was yelling at Leafy, who was yelling back at her, while Tennis Ball tried to calm them both down. But something was off. A cold feeling trickled down Pencil's graphite spine as she realized that Seekayaitch had vanished.

Facepalming, she stood and walked over. "What happened? Where's the human?" she demanded angrily.

"LEAFY here has allowed him to escape!" Golf Ball spat.

"I told you!" Leafy protested. "My new memories distracted me! He must have slipped away, or- or maybe his brother came back and grabbed him! It's not my fault!"

Tennis Ball physically stepped between them. "Okay, guys, that's enough. Look - we really don't have the time to argue about this, and we *definitely* can't go look for them. Once we're out of here and safe

in Nearby Yoyleland, then maybe we can worry. But for now, let's just stop arguing and make sure we're all ready for when Ruby, Book, Needle, and Puffball come back. Alright?"

Leafy took a deep breath, then nodded. "Fine," Golf Ball grumbled, before stepping away and hopping into the van.

Book stood up, rubbing her eyes. "Jeez," she said. "That was a lot of memories packed into a few seconds."

"I've only ever been in the dead zone, like, once," Ruby said cheerfully. "Time to head back!"

"Wait."

"What?"

Book looked at the cryo-chamber that the energy was attracted to a moment ago. "I know we don't have any time, but I'm really curious about what was in there."

She stepped over and peered through the tinted glass. "An... egg?" Indeed, there was an egg in there. But the colors were extremely muted, and it looked like it was collapsing in on itself. As Book watched, the egg suddenly crumbled to dust. Whatever the void machine had done to it wasn't good.

Book felt a pang of sadness for whatever creature was inside that egg. *Poor thing never even got to hatch.* She shook her head and turned back to Ruby. "Alright. Let's go."

Another twenty minutes passed without incident. Everyone was inside the van now, except for Balloony, Cloudy, Fries, and Roboty. Pencil sat in the driver's seat with Match on the passenger side. Pillow, Tennis Ball, Leafy, and Coiny sat in the far back seat, squeezed together by TB's bulk. Flower and Dora lay on the ground in between the rows of seats, and everyone else was packed together in the back of the van.

Except for Golf Ball, who was pacing in the same spot she had been nearly an hour ago. "Where are they?" she muttered to herself.

Roboty began to beep. "-... .- -.. / -. . .-- ... .-.-.- / - .... . / -. . .-- / ... .--. / .... .- ... / .- -.-. -.-. . .-.. . .-. .- - . -.. / .- -. -.. / .. ... / -. . .- .-. .-.. -.-- / .. -. / - .... . / .- - -- --- ... .--. .... . .-. . .-.-.- (Bad news. The new ship has accelerated and is nearly in the atmosphere.)"

"WHAT?!" GB stopped pacing. "Are you sure?"

".--. --- ... .. - .. ...- . .-.-.- (Positive.)"

Tennis Ball stuck his head out the van's back door. "What's wrong?"

"The humans have gotten much closer. We need to leave NOW."

"But Ruby's back there!" Pencil protested from the front seat.

"And Book," Match added.

"There's no time." GB hopped into the back of the van. "We'll have to leave them behind."

"But-"

"Look!" Gelatin interrupted, pointing dramatically towards the city. Puffball emerged from the cluster of buildings. Book was sitting on top of her, with Ruby and Needle clinging onto her sides.

In seconds, they reached the van. Needle, Ruby, and Book jumped off Puffball and climbed into the van, with Ruby and Book taking the two empty middle seats. "Where's the Locker Of Losers?" Golf Ball demanded. Needle tossed her the wooden box.

It suddenly got darker. Everyone who could see the sky looked up to find that a large silhouette was beginning to block the moon. "Time to go," Pie said. Even the normally calm pastry was looking anxious.

Golf Ball slammed the van's back doors shut. Fries climbed onto Puffball, Balloony grabbed Cloudy, and Roboty activated his rocket boosters. Those five sped ahead as Pencil stomped on the gas pedal. The van's tires rotated in place for half a second before carrying the

vehicle away.

For a full two minutes, the only sound anyone could hear was the soft humming of the car engine before Roboty's beeping filtering through the windows broke the relative silence. "- .... . -.-- .----. ...- . / -.. .-. --- .--. .--. . -.. / - .... . / -... --- -- -... .-.-.- (They've dropped the bomb.)"

Nobody needed a translation for that.

Pencil glanced into the rear view mirror. Reflected in it, through the back windows, was the city. A pulsating green globule was falling from the silhouette in the sky, straight towards the buildings. She looked away just before it hit, but it was impossible to miss the large green flash that lit up the terrain for a split second. Gas descended upon the city - nothing was physically damaged in it, but the neurotoxin would kill any living animal that was unlucky enough to breathe it. Not to mention that the gas would linger for years afterwards.

Nobody said anything else for the entire ride.

See you in IDFB 15 :)

IDFB 15: The end? 🕮

BFB 16, the EXIT, minutes before Spongy's elimination

Loser flipped to the next page. To his surprise, there was a handwritten note on this one. He recognized it as Donut's handwriting.

I thought I should add this here because nobody ever wrote down what happened directly after we made to Nearby Yoyleland. I want to make sure all the details are in here.

Once everyone got out of the van, Golf Ball put down the Locker of Losers right next to the bathrooms, then Pencil took her box back and made the van, well, vanish. Heh.

Everyone began brainstorming on how to free the others from the LOL - Barf Bag, Bell, Black Hole, Cake, David, Eggy, Firey Jr, Snowball, and TV - when Pillow told Golf Ball that she had a device that was basically a more advanced wall teleporter, and that she had had it since right before we left. GB screamed at Pillow about not telling her for a while, until Pillow brought up that she HAD been trying to tell her, and that GB kept pushing her away. That shut GB up real quick.

Everyone was released without a hitch. Almost. Something about the box was constricting Black Hole's size, because when he was free, he immediately began to grow and was forced to fly into space so that he didn't destroy the planet. We can still hear him, though, and he can still hear us. Bell also had a string appear out of nowhere. Who knows what THAT'S connected to.

Since Roboty was still "streaming" to TV, the others already knew what had happened, so that was good. I was getting tired of listening to long explanations. (Sadly, there was one more coming up soon, although I didn't know it yet.)

Leafy gave Golf Ball the instructions she had found for making new recovery centers, and GB said that she could probably create individual ones for everyone within a week. She and Tennis Ball were down in her factory for basically the entire time, but they did it.

Not much happened in between that time, except for Emerald leaving. Ruby told me that Emerald said it was "too crazy around here," and that she wanted to go back home. Honestly, if it wasn't for the fact that everyone I know is here, I probably would have left, too.

The note ended there. Loser flipped through the remaining pages - it looked as if there was only one chapter left. Finally nearing the end, he continued to read aloud from Donut's diary.

October 10th, 2017

"Wheeee!" Grassy shouted happily as Bottle chased him around the plains. Woody stood a distance away from them, looking a bit worried but also almost like he wanted to join in. Dora was perched on top of the bathrooms, for some odd reason. David was off doing his own thing. And Black Hole hovered over the planet, watching them all.

Everyone else - 54 objects - were sitting together and ready to talk.

Golf Ball shuffled through her notes one last time. "Alright," she said after several moments of tense silence. "It's been a while, so let's try to go through everything that happened one last time, to make sure that we know all the details. There are still some things that don't quite fit. Everyone here knows about everything related to the humans, and how they kidnapped Woody, Nickel, and others, as well as wiped FreeSmart's memories. Correct?"

Everyone nodded.

Golf Ball ticked off a box on her papers. "That's a lot of repetitive talking avoided," she muttered. "What other questions do people have?"

"I've got one for Leafy," Coiny said, turning to the lemon leaf. "Back

in December, when you freed Firey from the Yoyle Needle, you mentioned something to me. You said that the city wasn't safe anymore. Did you know something about the humans?"

Leafy stole a glance at Firey, but he was just staring off into the distance, not paying her any attention. Then she realized that everyone else was staring at her instead. "Not exactly," she confessed, looking at Gelatin, Pie, and Nickel. "You three - do you remember, at the beginning of last November, when you guys found something in that cave? The one at the base of the Yoyle Mountain?"

"I remember that," Pie responded. "There was a bunch of text and drawings on the walls. It was kinda creepy."

"Hold on, Leafster. How did you know about that?" Gelatin questioned.

Leafy fidgeted. "I watched you guys run out of that cave from behind a bush, and went in myself to check it out. That text was an older form of Yoylese. Did you guys read it?"

"We don't know Yoylese," Nickel said.

"Well, I managed to learn it when I was in Yoyleland for forever. And... I'm not sure if this is the right word, exactly, but I think it was some sort of prophecy."

Several objects began to murmur. "A prophecy? That's ridiculous," Golf Ball scoffed. "It's impossible to predict the future accurately, especially when using a non-scientific method. And prophecies are definitely *not* scientific."

"Then how do you explain the drawings?" Leafy demanded. "They had to be at least several thousand years old, and yet, there were drawings of Yoyle City, and the HPRC, and... *her."*

GB went quiet. Everyone knew which 'her' Leafy was referring to. Book remembered when she managed to find her way out of the tunnels underneath Yoyleland - after the attempt to look for leaf, fittingly enough - she had found the prophecy, too, and even managed to decipher a few words, but didn't think much of it.

"What did this 'prophecy' say?" Cake asked quietly.

Leafy took a deep breath. "The drawings were very accurate, but the actual text was pretty vague, for the most part. The main point was that it told of, and I quote, 'a great tragedy that would befall the city.' If that's not prophetic to what happened, I don't know what is."

"What *is* neurotoxin, anyway?" Saw questioned.

Gelatin answered. "It's this nasty gas that basically poisons and kills anything that breathes it."

"...oh."

"There's more." Leafy caught the other's attention again. "There was something else that the prophecy said could happen, which I think we narrowly avoided. It basically confirmed that *she* was a demon, which we already knew." Leafy never liked discussing her evil self. "But it also said that she had the power to destroy the world under the right circumstances."

"If Death Fosters Birth, then the world will burn..." Pie muttered. "That was the only line written in English. Maybe what it meant was that if she had control over the dead zone for too long, she could have come back in a physical form and..."

She didn't complete her sentence. Everyone was quiet for a minute as they processed this nugget of information.

"...so, by cutting off the dead zone, we basically saved the world?" Gelatin asked.

"Sounds like it," Pen confirmed.

"Cool!"

Golf Ball set her notes down and stared at the ground. "We were in a lot more danger than I ever realized," she muttered.

"Thank you all for cutting off the dead zone and saving me, by the way," Bubble commented cheerfully. "I feel so much better now, hoy hoy!"

Pin opened her mouth to ask another question, but then suddenly noticed that Needle had a look of intense guilt on her face. "Needle?" she asked haltingly. "Are you ok?"

Needle ran her hands over her face. "I have something to confess," she said. Everyone looked at her. "I... sort of... knew... that we would have to flee the city."

Cries of outrage arose from the crowd of objects.

"WHAT?!"

"But how?"

"You *knew??"*

"I hate you for not telling!"

"Please, everyone, just let me explain!" Needle cried out. Slowly but gradually, everyone settled down again. "About two weeks before Golf Ball and Tennis Ball found the wall teleporter, I went into the science museum as well."

"But why?" Tree wondered.

Needle shifted around. "To be honest, I'm not really sure. That place sort of... draws you in, almost. It has a magnetic feel to it that makes you want to know more."

Pencil nodded. She knew the feeling herself, as did GB and TB. Pillow also knew far too well what that felt like.

"I went all the way up to the top floor," Needle continued. "And I found a crystal ball. It, uh... this'll sound crazy, but it showed me some of the future. I saw FreeSmart exploring the museum soon after GB and TB did, and them alerting the humans to our existence. I didn't see everything, but I saw quite a lot."

Coiny thought back to two different occasions. When Yoyle Mountain turned out to be a volcano, Needle didn't seem surprised, and even suggested how to stop the lava flow. When Flower unexpectedly returned, Needle was the only one who wasn't startled.

"So *that's* why you were acting loopy in the weeks before TB and I went in there," Golf Ball said. "I remember the cryptic warning you gave us, but why didn't you just *tell* us the whole story?"

Needle crossed her arms. "If I had told you that I learned the future from a crystal ball, would you have believed me?" For the second time that day, Golf Ball was at a loss for words.

Book stood up. "Question for Flower," she said, grabbing the plant's attention. "When you came back to Yoyle City, you had the Firey Speaker Box with you, right?"

"Really?" Firey perked up. "He's here?? Where is he?"

"I don't know," Flower huffed. "Somebody *stole* him after I got back to all of you losers. But yes, he was with me."

"Did you deactivate him?"

"Yeah."

"So you've had him since after BFDIA 5?"

"Yeah..."

"Why?"

Flower got a grumpy look on her face. "When you guys left for the challenge, I was all alone over there for several months! Then Firey's Speaker Box returned, but he took the LOL and left again right after. He came back a bit later and I asked him to stay, or at least take me with him to Yoyleland, but he said no, so I deactivated him so he would stay. But eventually, I got bored and left on my own to actually come see the rest of you!"

Book shrugged and sat back down. Golf Ball ticked off another box in her notes and hummed in thought. "Three more things are still bugging me. Who recovered Woody and Leafy, and how did Rocky get his barf back?"

"We also don't know who cut Rocky's bungee cord back in January," Nickel pointed out.

Blocky raised a finger. "Not to mention the mystery of the DND board!"

Pillow felt like she was going to explode. Golf Ball, however, just stared at Nickel and Blocky blankly. "What?" They both quickly explained what they meant.

Leafy suppressed the urge to glance over at Firey. "I don't know who recovered me," she lied. "I can try asking Woody, though." Golf Ball nodded, and Leafy got up to go try to coax an answer out of the balsa slab.

Tennis Ball took a peek at Rocky, who was humming idly. "Well, if nobody confesses to somehow giving Rocky his barf back, or those other things, then I guess we'll never know."

Golf Ball looked at her notes once more, scribbled some words down, and crossed off a few boxes. Leafy returned and shook her head. "I don't think Woody knows, either," she said sadly.

The sports globule crossed off one final box, then looked up at everyone. "I believe that's everything. Does anyone else have questions for people?"

Leafy raised her hand. "I don't really have a question, but I do have a statement. I wanted to sincerely apologize for what I said to that human." She didn't meet anyone's gaze. "I was angry at that time, and so many things were going on. I know that what they wanted to do to us was horrible, but I believe that everyone deserves more than one chance, and I don't think I really meant what I said to him. I never would have actually hurt him."

She closed her eyes. "I get it if you can't forgive me, especially after the finale of BFDI, but I'm going to try to be a better person nonetheless. I just wanted to get that off my chest."

Nobody said anything, but there were mixed reactions. Some people smiled sympathetically, some people frowned, and some people didn't react at all. Coiny patted Leafy on the back, which made her smile a little herself.

Golf Ball cleared her throat. "Anyway, before we all adjourn, I propose that everyone writes down their experiences of Yoyle City, starting from the day Tennis Ball and I found the wall teleporter, and collect them all into one cohesive log. My paper supply is actually quite short right now, so if anyone has some paper, or a book of some sort, it would be appreciated." She glanced at Book, who scooted away.

"I have a book." Balloony held up a small green book. "I was going to use it to doodle, but I didn't really use it much, so you can have it."

"That would be perfect. Thank you!" Golf Ball walked over and took the book. "I will be visiting all of you individually to collect your points of view of what happened in Yoyle City over the next couple weeks. That is all." Without another word, she walked away from the crowd and towards her factory, Balloony's book and notes balanced on her head.

Several others just sat there for a moment, a bit surprised that the meeting ended so abruptly. "I guess that's that," Bell said. Mutters of agreement came from the crowd as they dispersed.

I guess this was more of a "tying up loose ends" chapter than anything lol but it needed to exist

I had to go through all the previous chapters and tally up the loose ends to make sure I didn't miss anything, haha (spoiler: there are a couple small ones idk what to do with so oh well)

We're not done yet, though! There's one more chapter to go, and then this book will finally be finished.

See you in the epilogue :(

(note: I didn't proofread so sue me)

Epilogue

BFB 16, the EXIT, minutes before Spongy's elimination

...is that it? Loser wondered silently. He flipped through the last few pages of the diary's secret side, which were mostly blank, except for the last one. More scribbles of Donut's handwriting, but a bit rushed this time, filled the page. Once more, Loser began to read it aloud.

"November 2nd, 2017. It's been a month since we managed to escape Yoyle City, and mostly everything's returned to normal. As I mentioned in my last note, Golf Ball managed to make recovery centers for everyone. Various other objects have come and gone, but the only ones that are still here right now are Foldy, Liy, Stapy, and of course, Loser. Nothing else has really changed since then, except that now everyone's in a better mood.

I sure hope nobody's reading this, but just in case... do you remember how at the beginning, there was some text that said how this book was entrusted to me? Everything I said there was true, but after reading this text in its entirety, I feel even guiltier about stealing this book now, and I figured maybe writing about it would help some.

Earlier this morning, I was chatting with Golf Ball and Tennis Ball, when suddenly... SOMETHING happened. She was talking about the humans when her face changed. Rather than the normal black eyes and mouth that most of us objects have, some of her dimples turned dark grey into a weird, twisted face. She growled at me before Tennis Ball grabbed her and dragged her away. I'm not sure how, but he managed to get her to return to normal.

After that, she seemed to be freaking out, and I overheard that she wanted to destroy any evidence of Yoyle City and "IDFB" - which is what everyone started calling it - to "make sure that this didn't happen again." She also said that she would go around and tell everyone to not talk about anything related to it.

But I was a bit worried for the same reason. If the humans ever returned, or if Evil Leafy somehow came back to life, I wanted to make sure we knew what to do.

So I stole the book.

I colored it blue, put some stickers on the front, and now it looks like new. Tomorrow, I'm going to add new pages to hide the IDFB-related events inside and use it as my diary. But after Golf Ball's weird freak-out, I thought she was hiding something from us and read the book. I put that note at the front just in case someone DID discover this and read it.

Now that I know the full story, I just feel guilty. I'm still not giving the book back, though. I want to be prepared.

Phew. I suppose that DID make me feel a little better. Maybe having a diary will be a good thing. Tomorrow's a new day, and with it, new possibilities!"

And that truly was the last entry in Donut's 'diary.' Loser quickly scanned everything to make sure he hadn't missed any more notes, or maybe another cryptic message, but he had read every last drop of information in there.

"Wow," was all he had to say. The cuboid sat in silence for a full five minutes, thinking about everything he had learned, before finally deciding to open the jawbreaker.

Crash! The two halves of the jawbreaker flew apart from each other, narrowly missing the four objects trying to break through. Loser glanced around the room and, seeing everyone, put on a smile and raised his hand in greeting. "Hi, everyone!"

Nobody greeted him back. They all looked almost sad. His smile flickered. "Uh, I said-"

"Welcome back, Loser," 8-Ball said in his monotone voice.

Liy looked at her desk in thought. "Huh," she mumbled. "So *that's* what everyone seemed so secretive about in my first week in

Goiky."

"What? You could hear me through the jawbreaker?" Loser asked, surprised.

"Yeah," Stapy answered. "But it seemed like you couldn't hear us."

"That's right."

"I never knew the part about Golf Ball's evil side, though," Firey Jr. admitted. "Those humans were messed up." Bracelety, 8-Ball, Pencil, and Match all murmured agreement.

"I... I almost feel sorry for her now," Pencil confessed. Everyone stared at her, as this was super out of character for the writing utensil.

Loser shook his head. "All that was in the past, and it's something that can't be undone. If it helps, Pencil, I forgive you."

"Thanks, Loser," she mumbled.

Stapy just shrugged and smiled. "Now that that's over with, we should throw a welcome back party for Loser! I'm so happy he's finally together with us all in the EXIT!"

"Well, *I'm* not."

As several people gasped dramatically at Liy's bold statement, Pencil just stared down at her hands, lost in thought. "Match?" she whispered weakly.

Match turned to her. "What's, like, up, Pence-Pence?"

"Am... am I a bad person? I know Golf Ball's not perfect, and in the end, she's still a bozo brain bossy bot, but... after hearing what she went through... I feel bad for throwing her into her incinerator, among other things. She was just trying to help and... and I basically spat in her face."

Match blinked in surprise. In all her years of knowing Pencil, she had never seen her this emotional. And she almost *never* showed sorrow

for other people. "Well..." Match started, unsure of how to tackle this. "Personally, I wouldn't say you're, like, a bad person. But we all make mistakes, and, like, maybe both you and Golf Ball just made a couple mistakes. You know?"

Pencil nodded. "I suppose... but I still don't really feel great." Match wasn't quite sure how to alleviate that feeling.

A paper airplane suddenly hit Pencil in her face. "Ow!" she complained, rubbing her forehead. Both her and Match glanced around the room to see Dora looking right at them. Unsettled by the clone's stare, Pencil unfolded the paper airplane to find a note. *You could try giving Golf Ball another chance,* it read. *Explain the situation and maybe you'll feel better. Who knows? Perhaps she'll even forgive you.*

"Eh," Pencil said, crumpling up the paper. She propped her elbow onto her desk and rested her head against her hand. "...maybe."

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...aaaaaaaaaand that's it! *IDFB: Continued* is OFFICIALLY wrapped up!

Wow, it's been a long 8 months, but absolutely worth the journey. It's going to feel really weird not having to work on this anymore.

Hope you don't mind if I ramble about various things. First off, there
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are a couple parts I'm not super proud of. Several chapters feel rushed to me, cause they were, and there are one or two loose ends that I teased early on but never got to tie up properly because I didn't plan everything in advance (something I REALLY should have done).

BUT. I *did* purposely leave in three big loose ends. Can you find them? And even though I kinda rushed some chapters, I'm still very happy with the overall result of this book. There are a couple ideas I never got to use, but oh well. (Another small thing: did anybody notice the dates in which the recent IDFB chapters have been taking place in? They, as well as when Donut wrote that last note, all precede a certain turning point in BFDI's history...)

Anyways, this isn't really related to the book anymore, but here's another general update on things. As of writing this *(February 27th, 2021)*, I'm still in my senior year of high school. There's two large projects that I'm working on - one's due at the end of March, and the other at the end of April. I'll still have school stuff after that (a bunch of tests, ew), and I don't actually graduate until early June, but once those projects are done, I'll have a lot more free time on my hands.

For now, I've mostly paused work on the *Crossing Over* sequel, although I'll still be working on the short stories book, albeit slowly. Due to new motivation, I'm also currently writing the murder mystery; the planning phase has been done for a while now. The idea is to pre-write about 2/3 or 3/4 of it, then start releasing chapters weekly while I finish the last few.

Once those two big school projects are done and I don't have to worry about them anymore, I'll continue working on the CO sequel. Between those two events, however - or maybe while I work on the CO sequel - I'm going to give *Powerless* another shot. It's been a while, but I'm nearly ready to start planning for it again. And this time, I'm making sure I've got *everything* planned out before writing the next chapter. (Same with the CO sequel.)

Is that everything? I think so. Oh yeah - over the summer, I'm going to be collaborating with someone on a super secret book. It's going to be a long time before it releases, but I think it's really cool (they came

up with the idea) and I wanted to tease it early ;)

TL;DR, thank you to every single person who's read this story from the start to the end! I've got a lot of stuff planned for the future, so you haven't seen the last of me yet. As always...

See you in my next stories :)

- Jabe

(also I really hope at least one of you noticed that "If Death Fosters Birth" spells out IDFB with the first letters of each word sdfgerjdmfsdgfn)